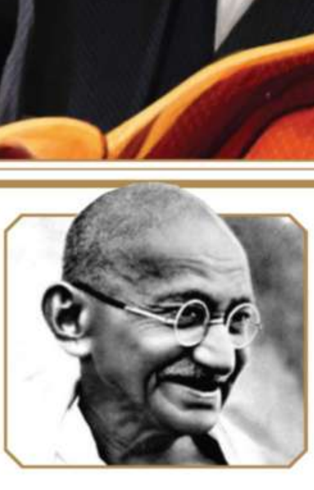
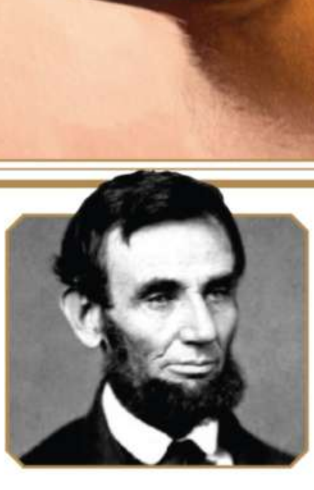
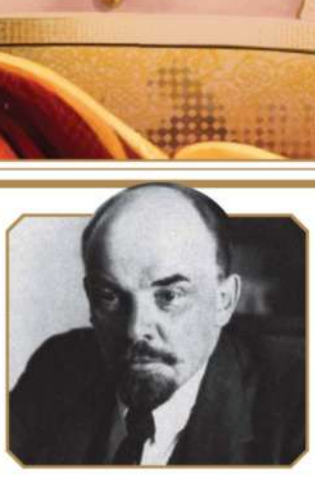
ALL ABOUT HISTORY

HISTORIC LEADERS

THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SHAPED THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD







ALL ABOUT HISTORY
Book of
HISTORIC LEADERS

For better or worse, individuals throughout history have changed the world. Leaving lasting legacies that are still remembered to this day, whether it was down to blind ambition, a divine belief, or dedication to a cause, certain men and women have cemented their place in history books. Some built vast empires as they looked to conquer the world, others fought for freedom and equality, while others united nations and implemented ideas and beliefs that are still lived by today. From Caesar and Cleopatra to Lincoln and JFK, from Genghis Khan and Joan of Arc to Napoleon and Henry VIII, this book takes an in-depth look at some of the world's most iconic leaders, and what they did to carve their place in history.

HISTORIC LEADERS

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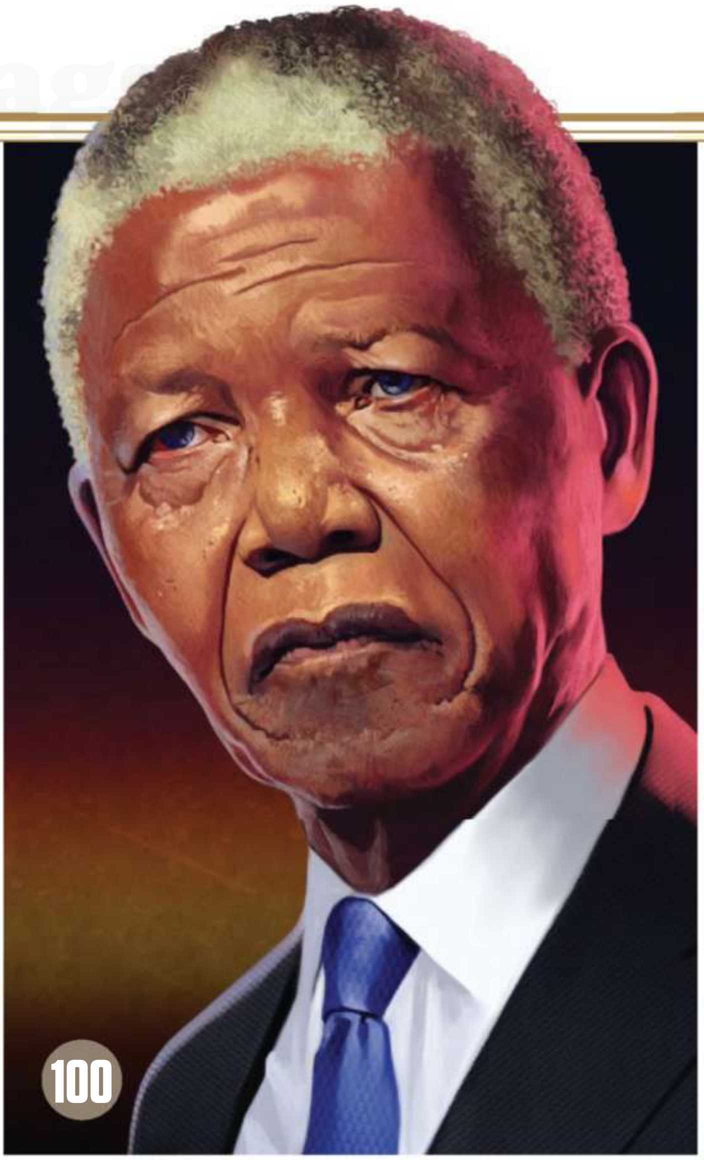

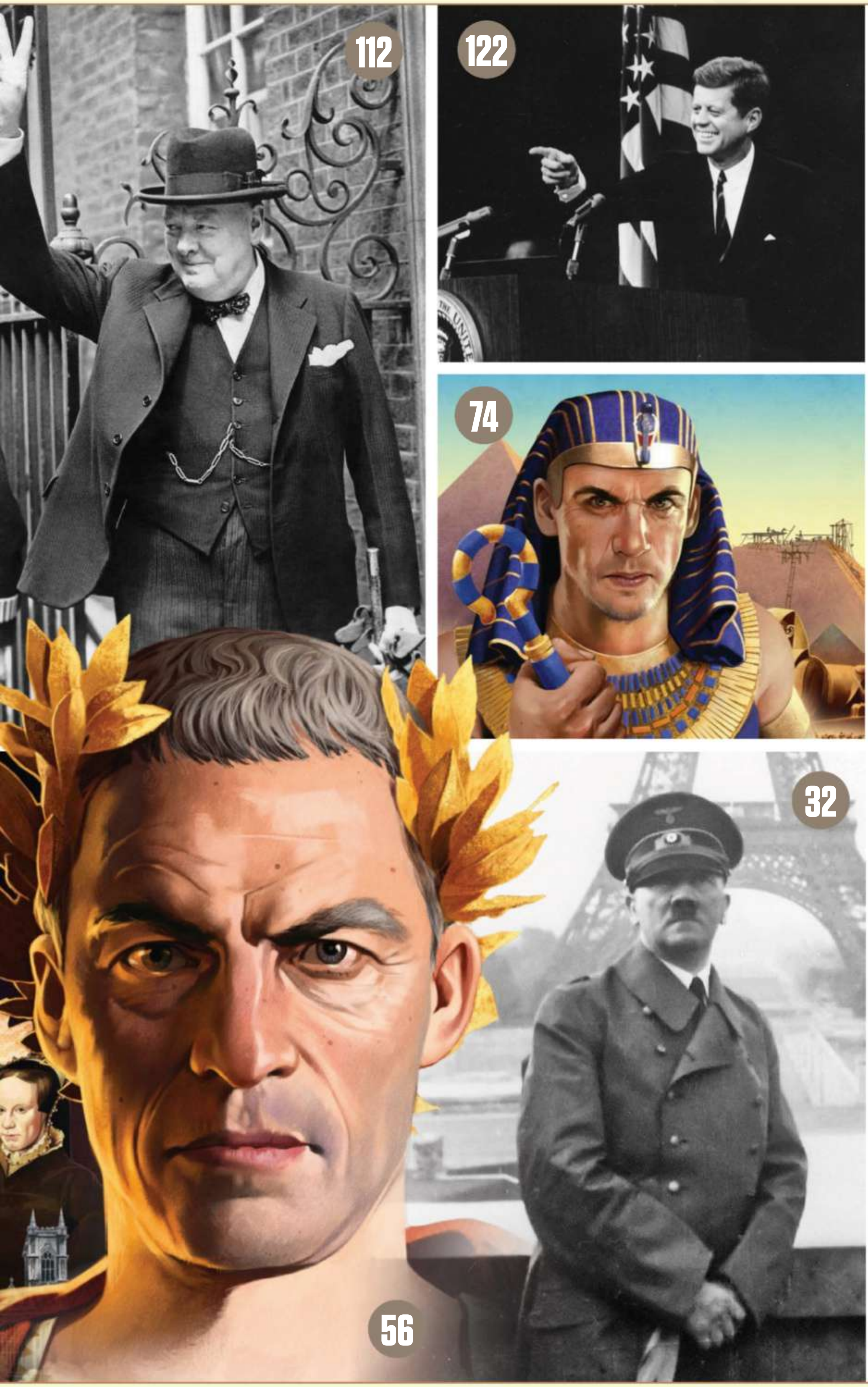

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WorldMags

Leaders Who Changed the World

Meet the leaders who through conquest, innovation, charisma, modernisation or bloodlust have altered the world forever

1809-1865

NATIONALITY
AMERICAN

LEGACY
GUIDED HIS COUNTRY THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR AND PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Lincoln proved himself to be an extremely capable war leader and strategist

Abraham Lincoln

Won the American Civil War

The American president who fought a war to keep his country united and was a key player in abolishing slavery

When he was elected the Republican candidate to stand as the 16th president of the United States, Lincoln had mixed emotions. This was his first election victory in five attempts, having failed to be voted into the US Congress and Senate. However, the victory was tempered by a threat that America was beginning to split apart at the seams, with an increasing division between the north and south of the country over many issues, most notably slavery. Lincoln's eventual victory in the presidential race triggered seven southern states to form the Confederacy.

These states elected Jefferson Davis as president and instigated a government structure closely resembling that of the US constitution. When one of the Confederacy states, South Carolina, demanded that American troops abandon their facilities there, it led to the Battle of Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861. Following the battle four more southern states joined the confederacy and Lincoln called for 75,000 men to join the army to suppress the rebellion. The American Civil War had begun and would leave over 600,000 soldiers dead.

Lincoln played an active role in the war, though he had little experience of military tactics. He was a prolific reader, however, so poured through military history and tactics books to become better acquainted with the art of war. He met with his war cabinet twice a week and also played a key role in appointing the army's generals based on merit. As well as waging a war, the new president had to contend with running a country and balancing the different political factions who all wanted something from him. It was a masterful juggling act. On 6 August, 1861, Lincoln signed the Confiscation Act that authorised slaves to be confiscated and freed who were used to support the Confederate war effort. The law had little effect, but signposted the president's intention to ban the use of slaves and the Emancipation Proclamation a year later stated the freedom of slaves in the ten states that were still in rebellion.

The war was turning in the Union's favour but Lincoln had to take time to campaign for re-election, for which he made emancipation a central theme. Even with war still raging, the leader was battling with questions about how to unify his country once again after the smoke from the battlefields had cleared. He decided to let the defeated states "up easily" and rejected the notion of punitive measures against them. He also pushed for the outlawing of slavery and the 13th amendment was ratified on 6 December, 1865.

Not only did Abraham Lincoln help abolish slavery in the United States, he fought a war to keep his nation united. His abilities as a leader led the Union to victory, but the way he worked to heal his divided country shaped its future forever.

Winston Churchill

Europe's WWII beacon of hope

Britain's wartime leader who defied Nazi Germany and led his country to victory

In Britain's darkest days of 1940 one man stood for hope against the Nazi hordes that were effortlessly flooding throughout much of Europe. Churchill's inspiring oratory, as well as his unshakable belief in Britain, the Empire and victory, helped rally a cause that looked lost. Brought up in a wealthy and upper-class family, the young Winston initially looked set to disappoint; he was not academically gifted and only blossomed when at Harrow he joined their Volunteer Rifle Corps. He joined the army, used his family connections to perform active duty within some of the most highly dangerous territories and supplemented his income by reporting on them.

He entered politics and when WWI broke out served both in office as the First Lord of the Admiralty and on the front, where he became famous for his bravery. After the war he returned to politics where he became a staunch critic of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy. When the nation turned to him following Chamberlain's resignation, he immersed himself in every aspect of the war effort, playing a key role in ending Hitler's dreams of Nazi world domination.

1874-1965

NATIONALITY
BRITISH

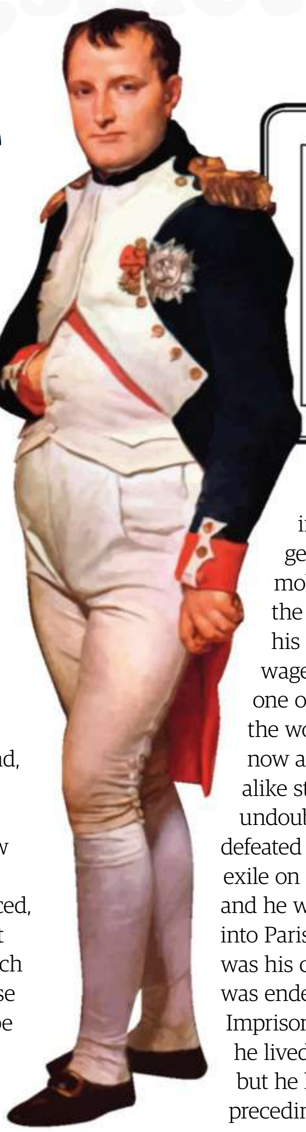
LEGACY
PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE DEFEAT OF NAZI GERMANY AND ENSURING EUROPE REMAINED FREE

Churchill was opposed to Chamberlain's policy of appeasement and as soon as war was declared, suggested a pre-emptive occupation of key ports

Napoleon Bonaparte

Instigator of the bloody Napoleonic wars

The man who made himself Emperor over France and much of Europe



1769-1821

NATIONALITY
FRENCH

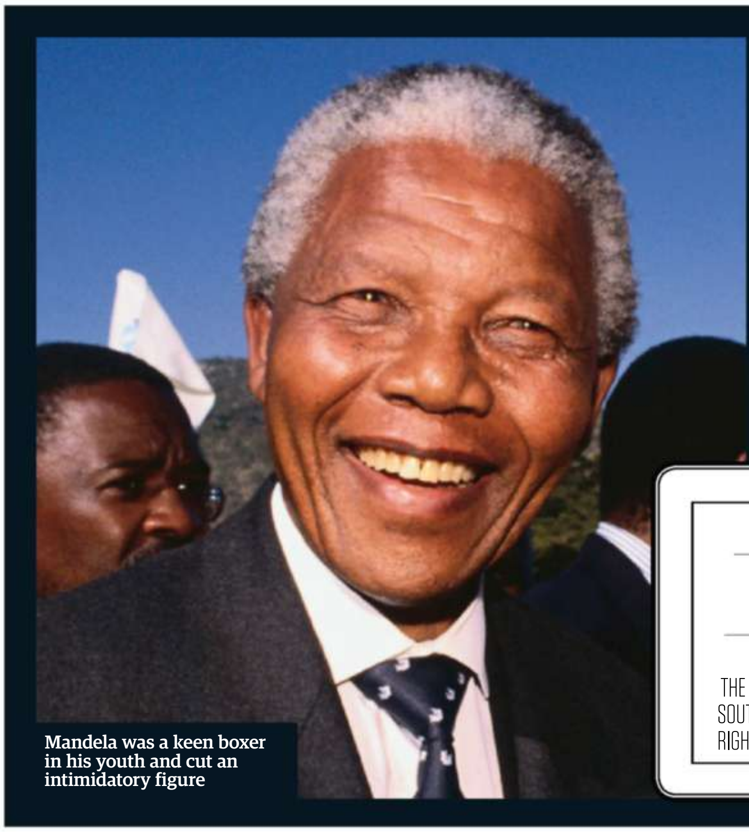
LEGACY
HE CHANGED THE MAP OF EUROPE AND INTRODUCED SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT THAT STILL ENDURE

The largest figure in French history, Napoleon irrevocably changed the course of his country and much of Europe during his lifetime. A highly skilled military commander, he made the most of the political and social upheaval in France caused by the Revolution and at the start of the 19th century appointed himself first as consul and then as emperor. However, he wasn't satisfied with just ruling his own country and had his eyes on the rest of Europe. In 1800 he defeated the Austrians at the Battle of Marengo in Italy and in 1803 a series of wars – named after him – began that would rage until his defeat at Waterloo at 1815.

The Napoleonic wars were fought between the French Empire and a number of changing coalition forces, but the one constant enemy he faced was the British. Invading his island nemesis was one of Napoleon's main goals and he is quoted as saying in 1797 that the French must "concentrate all our efforts on the navy and annihilate England. That done, Europe is at our feet". However, when his naval admiral dithered and the British forces scattering his fleet, the chance had gone and the Battle of Trafalgar extinguished his hopes. He instead set his sights on Austria and Russia and defeated both to extend his Empire. He dreamed of a united Europe, a land mass under one banner. While he didn't live to see this, his reign in France and parts of Europe did see a rise in nationalism and his victory over the Holy Roman Empire, which he then disbanded and turned into the Confederation of the Rhine, also changed the world as this would eventually form much of modern-day Germany.

At the height of his power he installed those loyal to him to rule in parts of Holland, Sweden, Spain and Italy but this military genius didn't just change the world by the sword; he instigated many reforms and new policies which had significant impacts. For instance, the Napoleonic code was introduced, which forbade privileges based on birth but instead looked to an individual's merit, which meant that government jobs or indeed those granted high positions in his army would be those who had genuine talent. The code also allowed freedom of religious worship and made the law simpler.

Although not a rabid military innovator like some of the great generals before him, his use of mobile artillery units changed the shape of warfare and forced his enemies to adapt how they waged war. He is considered to be one of the finest military strategists the world has ever seen and even now academics and military men alike still study his battles. Despite his undoubted skill in the field he was defeated by allied forces and went into exile on the island of Elba. A year later and he was back, marching confidently into Paris to retake what he believed was his city before his brief second reign was ended with the Battle of Waterloo. Imprisoned on the island of St Helena he lived out the rest of his life quietly, but he had made enough noise in his preceding years for lifetimes.



Mandela was a keen boxer in his youth and cut an intimidatory figure

Nelson Mandela

Brought the dawn of a new age for South Africa

Stood as an international symbol against the injustice of Apartheid

1918-2013

NATIONALITY
SOUTH AFRICAN

LEGACY
THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF A NEW SOUTH AFRICA THAT GAVE EQUAL RIGHTS TO PEOPLE OF ALL RACES

The 29-year-old activist and law student Nelson Mandela was shocked when he heard the news that the Reunited National Party (NP) had triumphed in the country's 1948 election – they had run on a platform of institutionalised Apartheid. The years that followed were dark ones for Mandela and his country; black people were required by law to carry a 'pass book' when out at night or face arrest, 69 people were killed during the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, while schools and medical care were also segregated.

Mandela became increasing active with the African National Congress (ANC), eventually establishing the organisation's first military wing, of which he was the leader. Sentenced to prison in 1963 he gave a rousing courtroom speech about the ideal of democracy and how it was "an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die". He was released in 1990 and famously forgave those who imprisoned him before becoming the first president of the new South Africa four years later.

John F. Kennedy

The charismatic statesman

One of the first modern-day leaders who embraced the power of the media

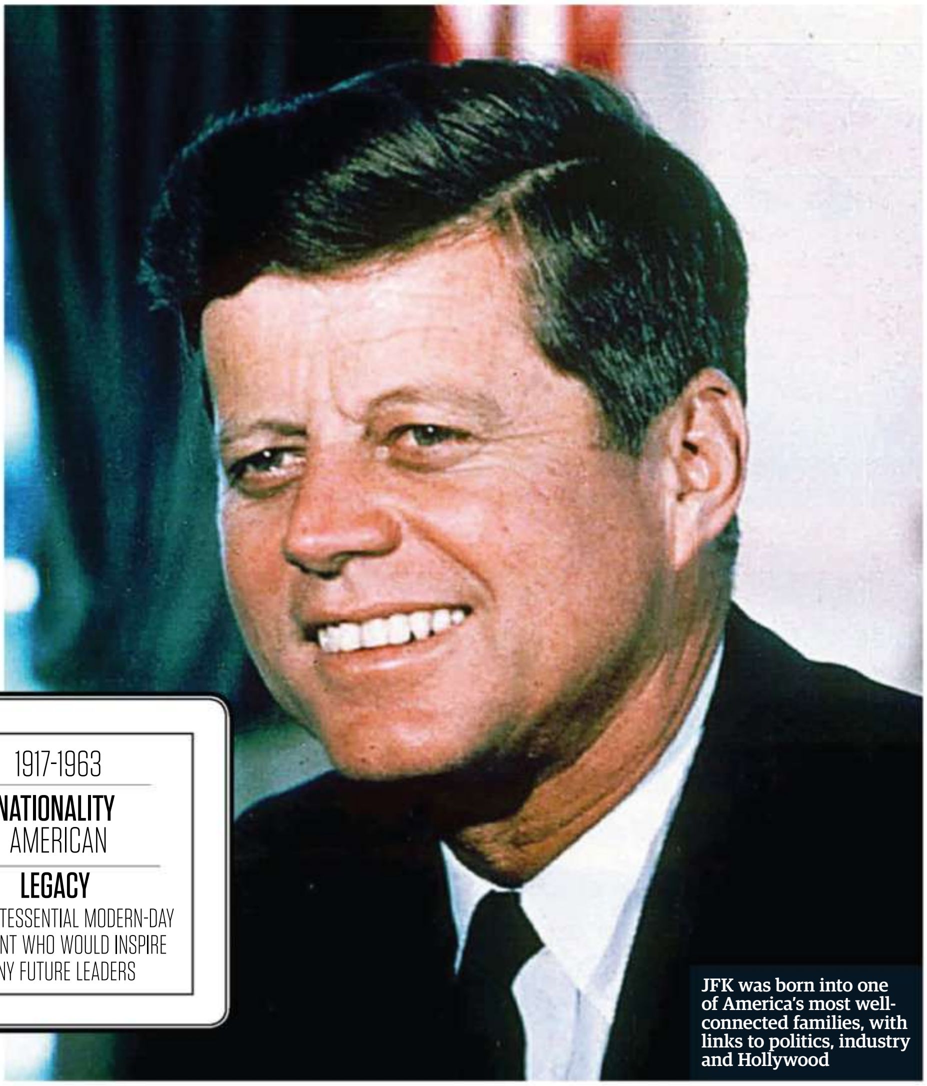
The man known as JFK changed the world of politics forever and has acted as a road map for many leaders around the world. When the young Democratic senator entered the presidential race against the more-experienced Richard Nixon, politics was dominated by the old guard and no one initially gave him a chance of winning. In what was one of closest elections in American history, the turning point was a live television debate, the first of its kind, which was watched by over 60 million people. Those listening on the radio said Nixon had won but those watching on their new-fangled televisions gave it to Kennedy thanks to his charisma and easy charm.

Kennedy would prove to be a popular president, guiding his country through the dangerous Cuban Missile Crisis and while some believe he could have done more to advance civil rights, he did support Martin Luther King. By the time of his assassination, the world had lost a charismatic leader but his blueprint for modern leadership would ensure his legacy would live on.

1917-1963

NATIONALITY
AMERICAN

LEGACY
THE QUINTESSENTIAL MODERN-DAY PRESIDENT WHO WOULD INSPIRE MANY FUTURE LEADERS



JFK was born into one of America's most well-connected families, with links to politics, industry and Hollywood

Alexander the Great

One of the greatest military minds who conquered much of the known world

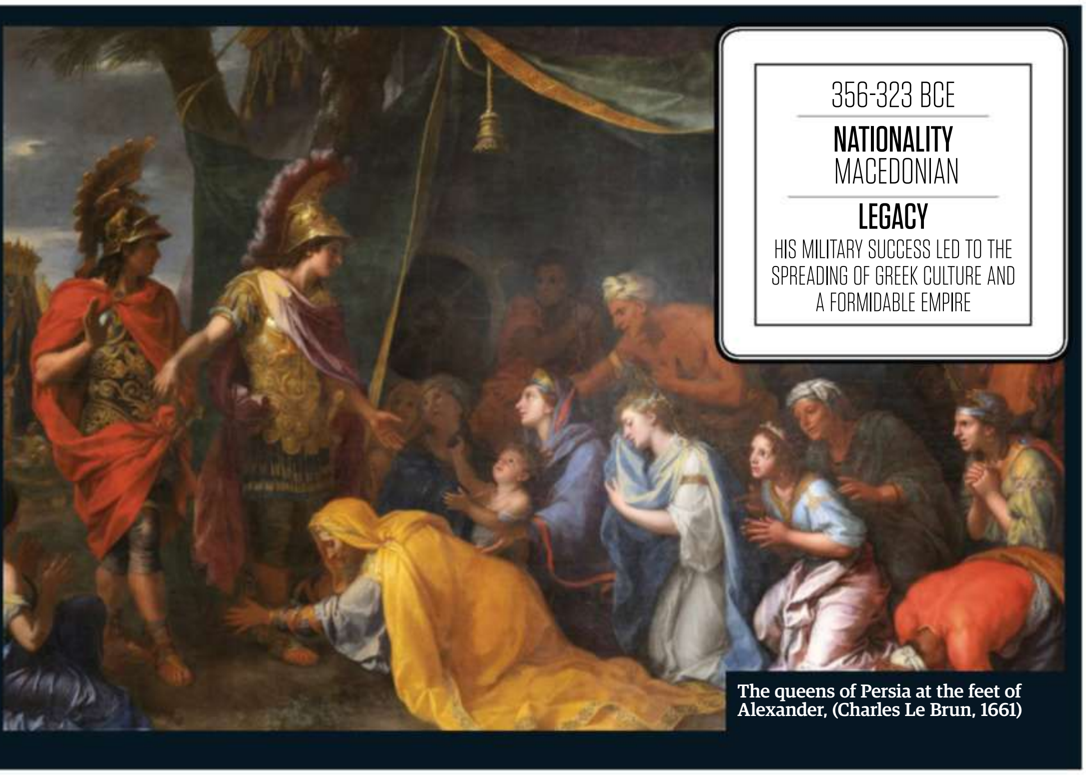
Alexander III of Macedon inherited a formidable army from his father Phillip II. This mighty and experienced force was already greatly feared across the land, but under Alexander's command the carnage it wreaked became legendary.

Trained in combat and leadership from an extremely young age, Alexander defeated the Achaemid and Persian Empires and established more than 20 new cities. In so doing, he spread Greek culture far and wide, solidifying its strength in the world, while also adopting many of the cultural customs of the countries he invaded, securing his enduring legacy.

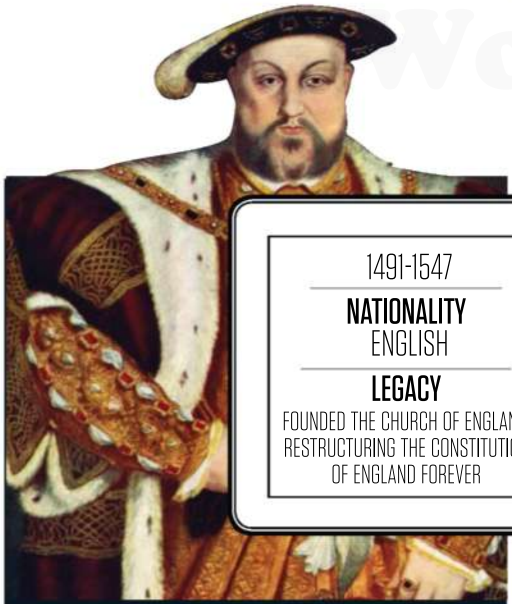
356-323 BCE

NATIONALITY
MACEDONIAN

LEGACY
HIS MILITARY SUCCESS LED TO THE SPREADING OF GREEK CULTURE AND A FORMIDABLE EMPIRE



The queens of Persia at the feet of Alexander, (Charles Le Brun, 1661)



1491-1547

NATIONALITY
ENGLISH

LEGACY
FOUNDED THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, RESTRUCTURING THE CONSTITUTION OF ENGLAND FOREVER

Henry VIII

Shaped modern Christianity

When it became clear that Catherine of Aragon (who was 24 years older than her king) would provide Henry with no male heirs, the future of Christianity was changed forever. Desperate for a son to secure his legacy and seduced by the young Anne Boleyn, Henry broke away from Catholicism and established The Church of England.

1919-1952

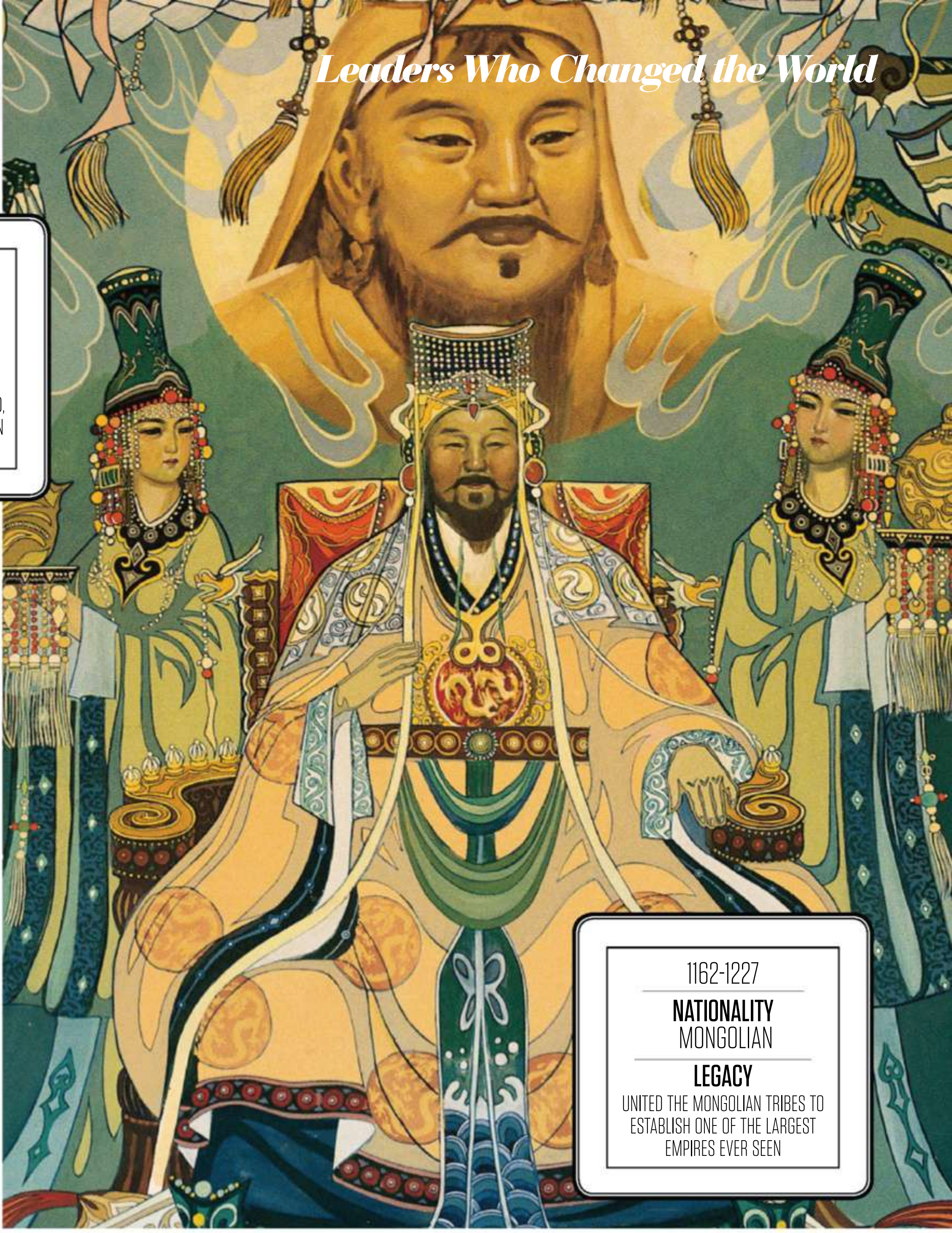
NATIONALITY
ARGENTINIAN

LEGACY
ARGENTINA'S CHARMING FIRST LADY WHO INSPIRED GENERATIONS OF WOMEN ACROSS THE GLOBE

Eva Perón

South America's first lady

The wife of Argentinian president Juan Perón, Eva had a huge influence on her country and beyond. She championed labour rights, women's suffrage and even founded the country's first large-scale female political party. Such was her popularity, she even decided to run for the vice-presidency but ultimately withdrew her candidacy and died of cancer a year later.



1162-1227

NATIONALITY
MONGOLIAN

LEGACY
UNITED THE MONGOLIAN TRIBES TO ESTABLISH ONE OF THE LARGEST EMPIRES EVER SEEN

Genghis Khan

One of the world's most brutal leaders

The father of one of the greatest empires ever, his military might still inspires fear and awe today

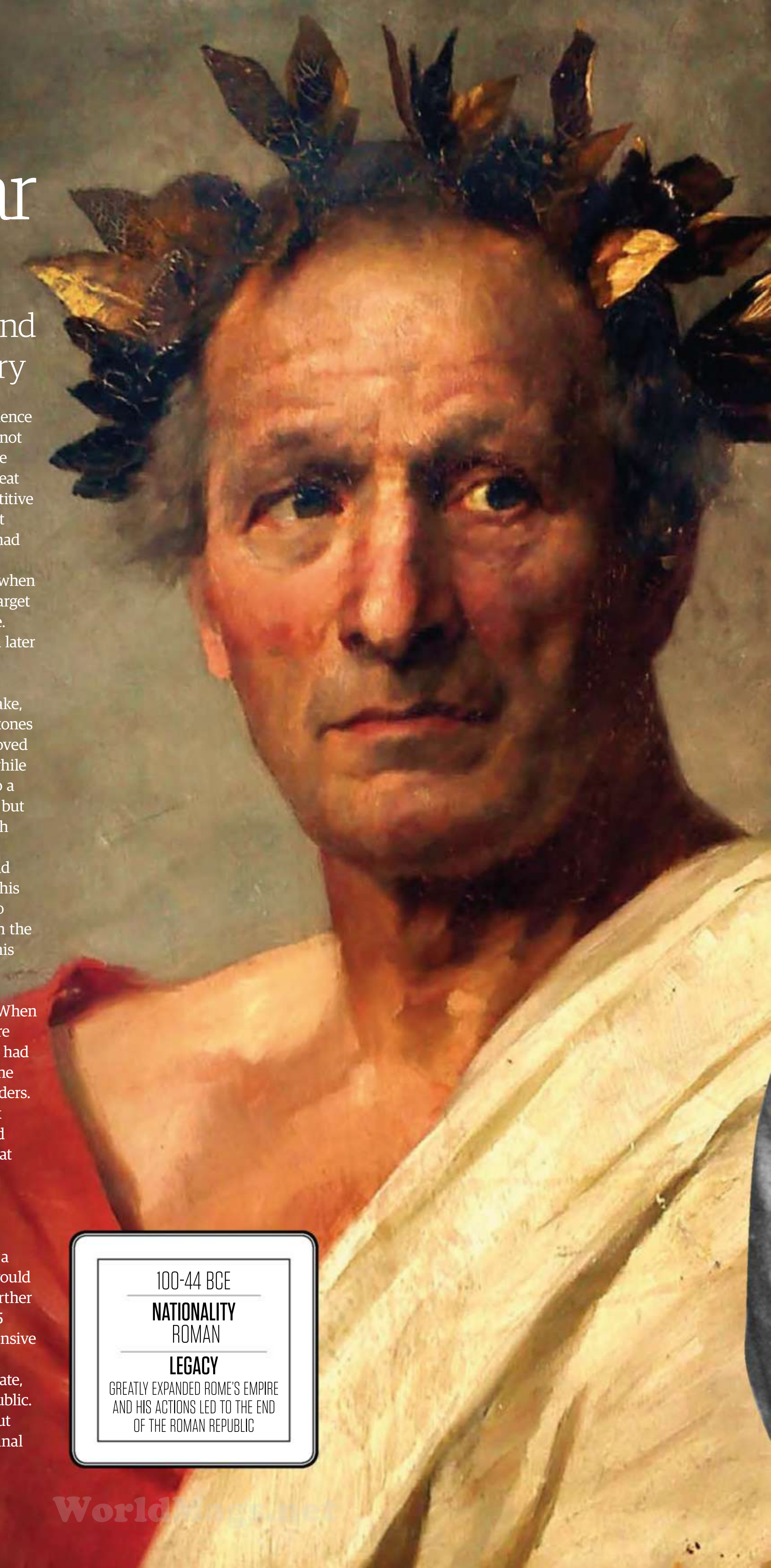
Born as Tremujin, in a Mongolian tribe, as a young man he united the different nomadic tribes through a mixture of war and diplomacy. Aged just 20, this great Khan then set about conquering much of the known world with his feared horsemen. Campaigns followed in parts of modern China, Russia, southern Asia and eastern Europe. He promoted on merit, allowing his generals the luxury of one mistake - proving himself an adaptable and strategic military leader.

His troops could be devastatingly brutal and it wasn't uncommon for them to execute all male prisoners, take the women as hostages and burn the village to the ground. It has also been said that Genghis himself raped so many women that one in every 200 males in the world now shares his Y chromosome. The Great Khan's predecessors actually managed to even expand the empire, making it one of the largest the world had ever known and confirming his brutal and lasting influence on the world.

Julius Caesar

Destroyer of the Roman republic

The skilled politician and military leader whose rise and fall from power are legendary



For the early part of Caesar's life there was little evidence pointing to the profound influence he would have, not just on Rome, but the world. This isn't to say that he wasn't clever, or ambitious, but Rome was full of great men trying to make their mark in this most competitive of societies. The Rome this young man swaggered about confidently in was one of turmoil; the Roman republic had proved itself to be a breeding ground for instability and violence. This instability almost caught up with Caesar when his marriage connection to an old regime made him a target for the new one and he was told to divorce his new wife. The young man - displaying some of the steel he would later show in spades - refused and joined the Roman army.

He excelled in the army and on his return to Rome followed the path that all great men were expected to take, winning elections to posts that were seen as stepping stones to consul, the top job. During this time he had again proved his military mettle with triumphs over Spanish tribes while serving there as a governor. His victories entitled him to a Triumph, something all great men of Rome dreamed of but only a handful a generation would achieve. The Triumph would enable Caesar to march through Rome with his army and be hailed a conquering hero. However, to stand for election for the coveted consulship he needed forgo his Triumph, something his enemies thought unlikely. Who would give up the chance to be adored by all of Rome in the greatest PR opportunity available? A kind of man with his eye on the long game. A kind of man like Caesar.

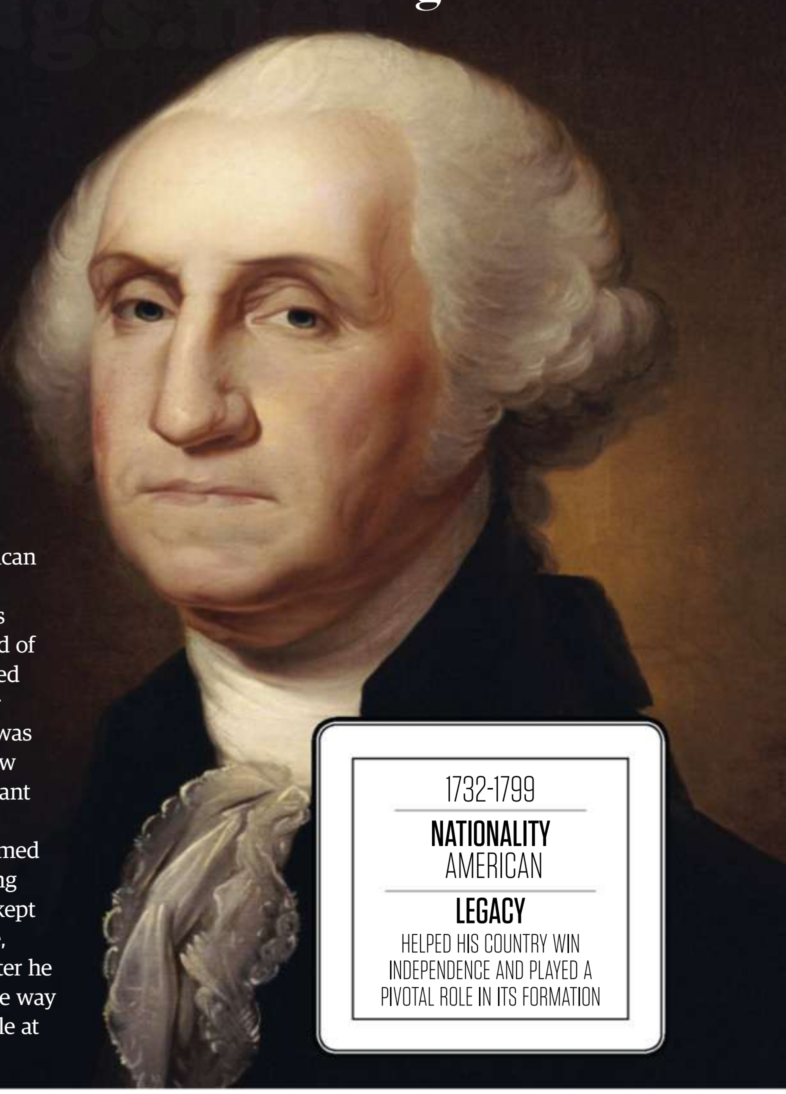
As consul, Caesar formed the first Triumvirate with Crassus and Pompey and achieved almost all his aims. When his year-long consulship was over, he went to Gaul where he would stay for the next eight years waging war. If he had died at the end of that campaign he would still have gone down in posterity as one of Rome's greatest military leaders. Another general, however, was getting jealous and, back in Rome, Pompey demanded Caesar return to Rome and disband his army. Caesar refused and defeated his rival at the battle of Pharsalus.

On his return to Rome, Caesar was quickly elected as consul for the second time and then also as dictator. Believing that Rome needed a strong leader to knit the ever-expanding Empire into a cohesive force, he passed a number of laws that ensured his hold on government would be complete. With this achieved, he authored several further reforming laws, such as changing the calendar to be 365 days long, land and debt reforms and approving an extensive amount of public building. By establishing himself as a dictator and significantly limiting the powers of the senate, Caesar played a major role in the end of the Roman republic. After his assassination, another civil war would break out before Octavius became the first Emperor and put the final nail in the coffin of the once glorious republic.

100-44 BCE

NATIONALITY
ROMAN

LEGACY
GREATLY EXPANDED ROME'S EMPIRE AND HIS ACTIONS LED TO THE END OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC



George Washington

The ultimate founding father

Key figure in the writing of the American Constitution

Washington had been commander-in-chief of the American forces against the British in the War of Independence and his strategies had helped secure victory. After this success, in a move that would set the tone for the kind of country he wanted America to be, Washington resigned as commander-in-chief rather than take power for himself. Four years later, dissatisfied with the progress the fledgling country was making, he presided over the Constitutional Convention that saw the creation of the American Constitution, still the most important document in the country's history.

Washington was elected as the first president in 1789 and formed a national bank, implementing a tax system and setting the precedent of giving an inaugural address. He kept America out of the many wars waging in Europe, giving his country time to develop and grow. After he had served for two terms he stood down to make way for John Adams in a move that led to even people at the time calling him "father of the country".

1732-1799

NATIONALITY
AMERICAN

LEGACY
HELPED HIS COUNTRY WIN INDEPENDENCE AND PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ITS FORMATION

Caesar's actions led to the ending of the Roman Republic, which was a democracy of sorts

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

The father of the Turkish nation

The influence of the former Turkish army officer on his country can be seen by his surname – which means 'father of the Turks'. This name was granted to him in 1934 by Turkish parliament.

After serving his country in World War I, Atatürk was a key figure in the Turkish fight for national independence and embarked on a series of reforms for the newborn country.

1881-1938

NATIONALITY
TURKISH

LEGACY
THE KEY FIGURE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TURKEY AS A COUNTRY

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

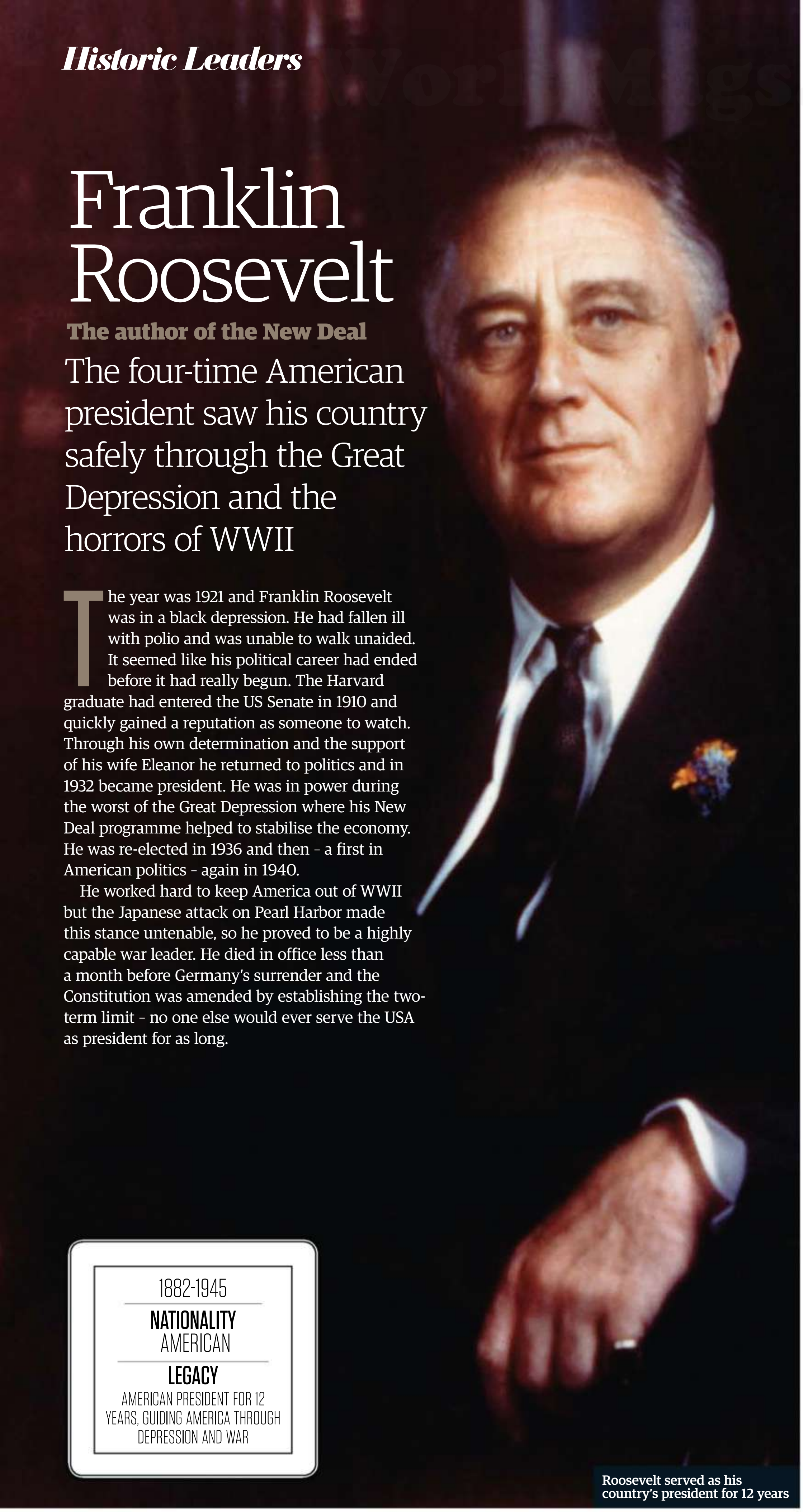
Established Russia as the world's first constitutionally socialist state

Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, Lenin played a key role in another revolution that year, which saw the Russian Provisional Government ousted in favour of the world's first constitutionally socialist state. His new economic policy started the process of industrialisation and by the time of his death the Soviet Union was on its way to becoming a world power.

1870-1924

NATIONALITY
RUSSIAN

LEGACY
ESTABLISHED RUSSIA AS A COMMUNIST STATE AND BEGAN INDUSTRIALISING THE COUNTRY



Franklin Roosevelt

The author of the New Deal

The four-time American president saw his country safely through the Great Depression and the horrors of WWII

The year was 1921 and Franklin Roosevelt was in a black depression. He had fallen ill with polio and was unable to walk unaided. It seemed like his political career had ended before it had really begun. The Harvard graduate had entered the US Senate in 1910 and quickly gained a reputation as someone to watch. Through his own determination and the support of his wife Eleanor he returned to politics and in 1932 became president. He was in power during the worst of the Great Depression where his New Deal programme helped to stabilise the economy. He was re-elected in 1936 and then - a first in American politics - again in 1940.

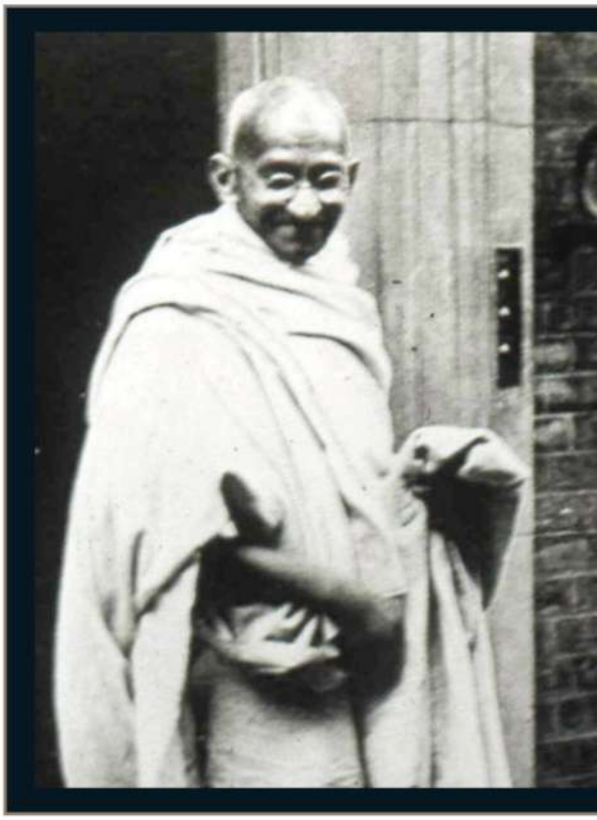
He worked hard to keep America out of WWII but the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor made this stance untenable, so he proved to be a highly capable war leader. He died in office less than a month before Germany's surrender and the Constitution was amended by establishing the two-term limit - no one else would ever serve the USA as president for as long.

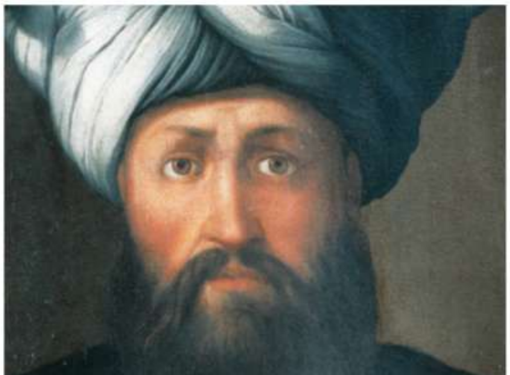
1882-1945

NATIONALITY
AMERICAN

LEGACY
AMERICAN PRESIDENT FOR 12 YEARS, GUIDING AMERICA THROUGH DEPRESSION AND WAR

Roosevelt served as his country's president for 12 years





Saladin

Secured Jerusalem from the armies of the crusades

At the Battle of Hattin in 1187, within present-day Israel, two great forces clashed: Saladin's Muslim armies against the crusaders. The victory led to the Muslim army retaking Jerusalem and driving their opposition away. The Third Crusade would retake much of Saladin's victories, but the city would remain in Muslim hands after a treaty between Saladin and Richard I, known as the Lionheart.

1137-1193

NATIONALITY
PERSIAN

LEGACY
SECURED JERUSALEM FROM THE CRUSADERS

1869-1948

NATIONALITY
INDIAN

LEGACY
SHOWED THE STRENGTH PEACEFUL PROTESTS CAN HAVE

Mahatma Gandhi

Unofficial father of a nation

The champion of peace who defied an empire

After training in England as a barrister, Gandhi returned to his native India and devoted his life to freeing his country from the rule of the British Empire.

Gandhi advocated purely peaceful protests and civil disobedience in his opposition of the Empire, with a famous example of this being his 400-kilometre (250-mile) march protesting against the British salt tax.

Famously he also led a basic life, wearing only a simple cloth that he spun himself and usually carrying a stick to aid him as he walked. Twice imprisoned, by the time of his assassination, India was on its way to being free of British rule.

Today he is still remembered as the man who delivered India from colonialism and his example of peaceful protest is an example to the world.

Augustus

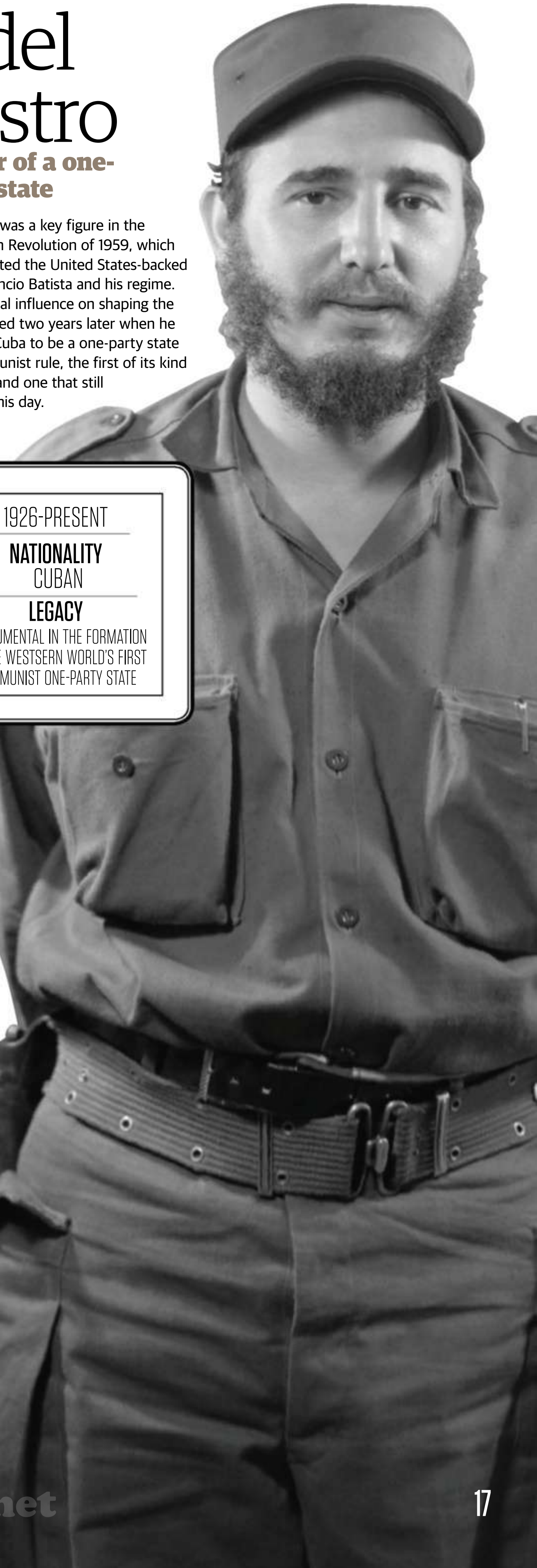
Rome's first emperor

Following the assassination of Julius Caesar, his maternal great uncle, Gaius Octavius formed the second Triumvirate to defeat Caesar's killers. The power arrangement ruled Rome after victory but when divisions appeared Octavius emerged victorious and granted himself a number of powers for life. Rome's first emperor was born and Octavius became Augustus. The dream of the Roman republic was truly over.

63 BCE-14 CE

NATIONALITY
ROMAN

LEGACY
THE FIRST-EVER ROMAN EMPEROR, BUT MANY MORE WOULD FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS



Fidel Castro

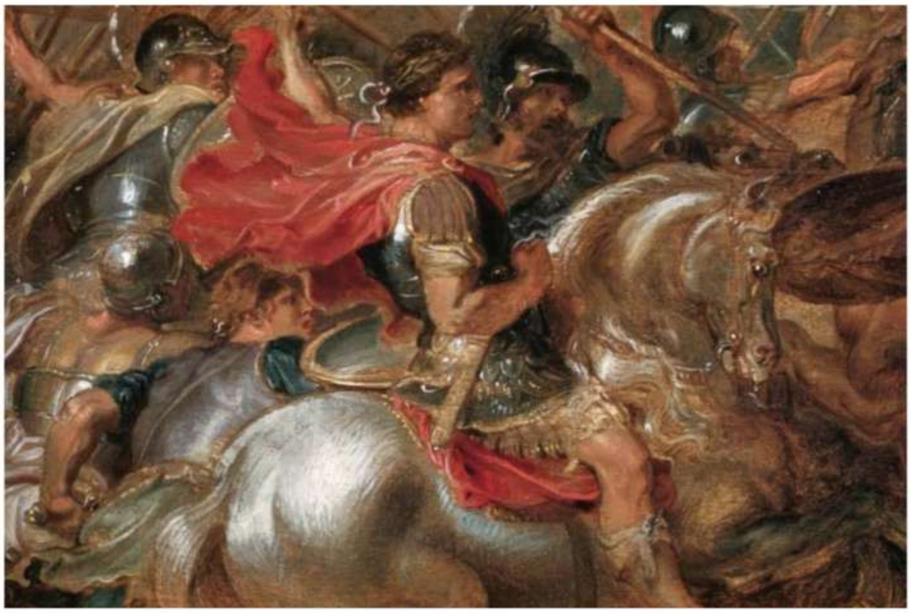
Leader of a one-party state

Castro was a key figure in the Cuban Revolution of 1959, which defeated the United States-backed Fulgencio Batista and his regime. His real influence on shaping the world occurred two years later when he proclaimed Cuba to be a one-party state under communist rule, the first of its kind in the West and one that still endures to this day.

1926-PRESENT

NATIONALITY
CUBAN

LEGACY
INSTRUMENTAL IN THE FORMATION OF THE WESTSERN WORLD'S FIRST COMMUNIST ONE-PARTY STATE



Constantine the Great

The first Christian Roman emperor

When the 57th emperor of the Roman Empire converted to Christianity, the history of the world changed. Before Constantine, Christians had been persecuted but through the Edict of Milan the religion was legalised. The emperor became a great patron of the church and the religion went on to become Europe's dominant faith.

272-337 CE

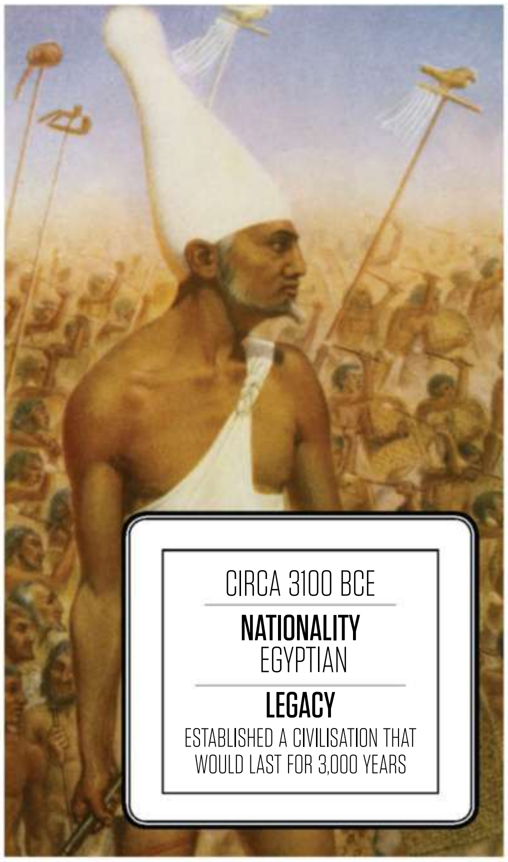
NATIONALITY
ROMAN

LEGACY
LEGALISED CHRISTIANITY AND DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO IT BECOMING A DOMINANT FAITH

Narmer

United Upper and Lower Egypt to become the first pharaoh

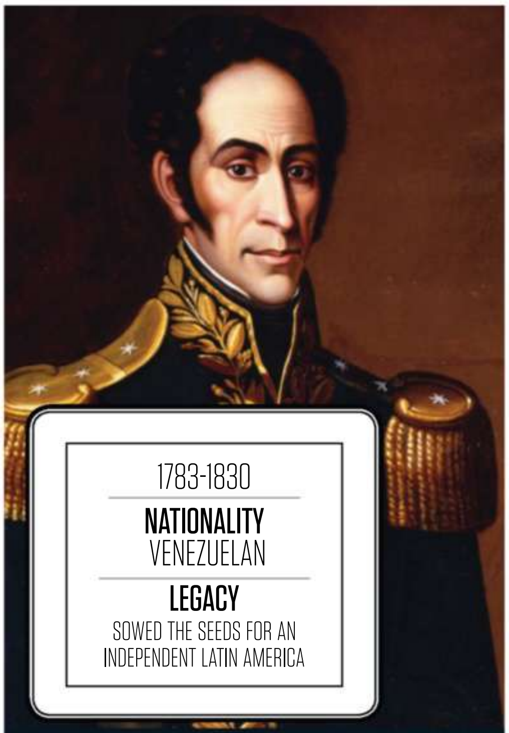
Ancient Egypt is one of the world's greatest civilisations, but the world may not have witnessed this culture of amazing constructions, mummifications, art and wealth if it weren't for Narmer. Also known as Menes, he was the ruler of Upper Egypt and conquered Lower Egypt to become pharaoh of a civilisation that would last over 3,000 years.



CIRCA 3100 BCE

NATIONALITY
EGYPTIAN

LEGACY
ESTABLISHED A CIVILISATION THAT WOULD LAST FOR 3,000 YEARS



1783-1830

NATIONALITY
VENEZUELAN

LEGACY
SOWED THE SEEDS FOR AN INDEPENDENT LATIN AMERICA

Simon Bolivar

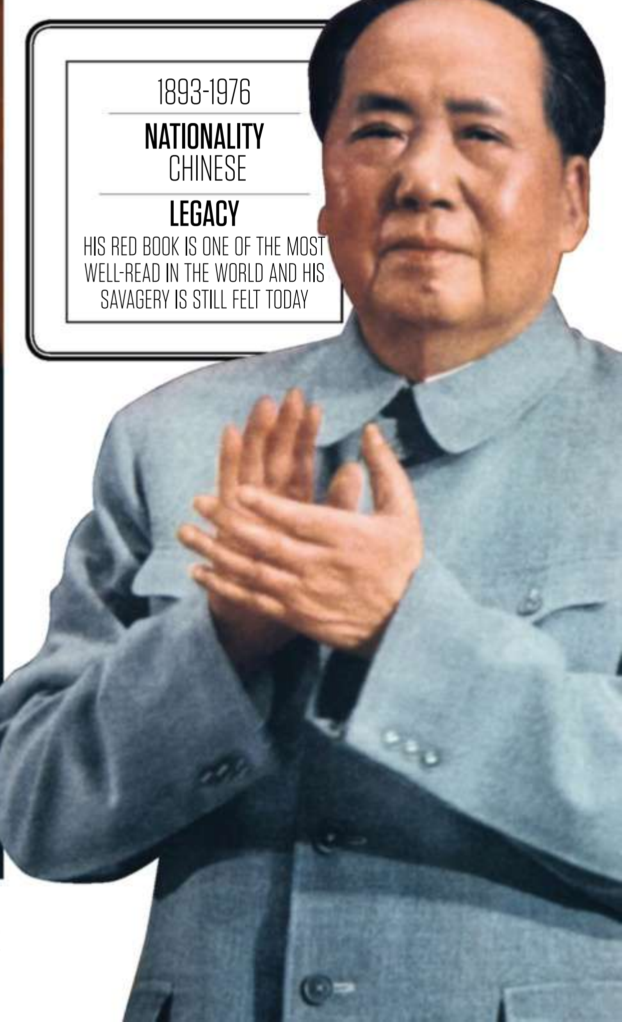
Key role in establishing democracy in Latin America

The son of a colonel, Bolivar had a keen military mind and put that to good use as he led military campaigns against the Spanish Empire. The Spanish dominated much of Latin America but Bolivar's key victories helped countries such as Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador and Bolivia establish independence.

Mao Zedong

China's communist chairman who murdered tens of millions

As a young man Mao joined the Communist Party fighting for Chinese freedom from Japan during WWII, before rising through the party to become chairman. His attempts to industrialise the country – including his five-year plan, or Great Leap – as well as ruthless purges of undesirables would see tens of millions of his own citizens killed.



1893-1976

NATIONALITY
CHINESE

LEGACY
HIS RED BOOK IS ONE OF THE MOST WELL-READ IN THE WORLD AND HIS SAVAGERY IS STILL FELT TODAY

Adolf Hitler

Waged war that decimated much of Europe and beyond

His desire for world domination led to the bloodiest conflict the world has ever seen

Hitler's mark on history is as unquestionable as it is horrific. With Germany on its knees after WWI and suffering from the effects of the Treaty of Versailles, such as hyperinflation, the country looked for someone to restore national self-belief. A veteran of the Great War and a hypnotic public speaker, Hitler soon gathered followers but failed to oust President Hindenburg in three national elections. However, due to the lack of an effective government the president was persuaded to appoint the young pretender as Chancellor. Hitler never looked back. After the Reichstag fire of 1933, detention without trial was allowed and Hitler's men stepped up their intimidatory tactics. He soon gained full control over all branches of the government through the Enabling Act. On 14 July 1933 Hitler's NSDAP was declared the only legal political party.

The Führer began to mold Germany into a shape that pleased him: the Third Reich. There was progress for the German people to point to, as one of the largest infrastructure improvements in history began with new roads, dams and railways springing up and unemployment falling. One of the main tenets of the Treaty of Versailles was the restriction of Germany's military forces. Once he was solely in power Hitler ignored this and began building up the country's military capability to a fearsome number.

By March 1935 it was announced that the Wehrmacht would be expanded to 600,000 members - six-times the number permitted by Versailles. Further indication of his intent would be seen time and again but, with the memory of the loss of life of WWI still fresh in their memories, Europe's leaders chose a policy of appeasement to try to prevent a second war in Europe. This policy came to a halt when Germany invaded Poland in 1939 and on 3 September Britain and France declared war.

In Hitler's Reich, anyone that the state saw an undesirable experienced at best discrimination and at worst death. In his book *Mein Kampf* Hitler outlined his irrational hatred of the Jews and as one of the main groups on his deadly radar the consequences would be catastrophic. By the end of WWII it was estimated that the holocaust had killed over 6 million Jews at horrific death camps such as Auschwitz and Dachau.

The Second World War was the bloodiest conflict the world had ever seen and by its end had seen major battles in Europe, Africa and the Pacific. Hitler's grand plan was for Nazi world domination, for his Aryan race to rule the world. But for the determination and ability of Winston Churchill to galvanise a nation, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor bringing America into the war and Germany reneging on its pact with Russia and turning it from an ally into an enemy, he may well have succeeded. WWII led to the deaths of over 50 million people and its effects are still being felt today.

1889-1945

NATIONALITY
AUSTRIAN

LEGACY
NAZI GERMANY'S ACTIONS ARE A HORRIFIC EXAMPLE OF THE CRUELTY HUMANS ARE CAPABLE OF

Hitler's actions were the spark that caused WWII, history's bloodiest conflict

Ramesses II

One of Ancient Egypt's most-powerful pharaohs

The ruler of Egypt for over six decades and master of propaganda and self-promotion

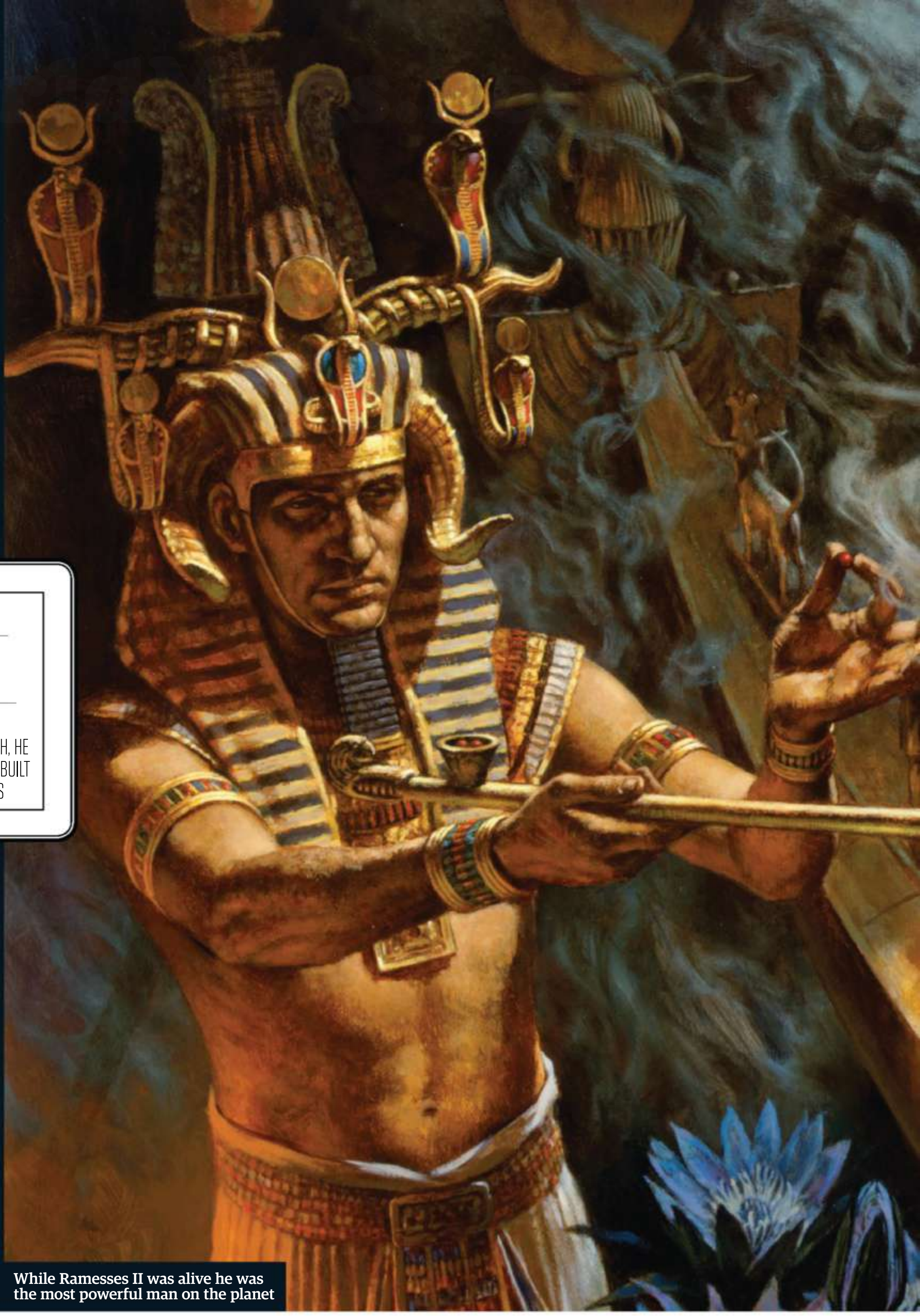
Standing six-feet tall and with sharp, hard facial features, Ramesses II looked every inch a divine warrior, which was exactly what he promoted himself as. Known as Ramesses The Great, he was groomed for leadership from an early age and ruled Egypt for over 60 years, longer than the average Egyptian's life expectancy. He conquered new territory for his civilisation – which he wasn't slow to promote – but one of his major achievements was in ensuring that his long reign was mostly peaceful, enabling the ancient civilisation to thrive.

Father of over 140 children, the pharaoh was viewed as a living god to his people who revered and worshipped him as such. Among Ramesses' lasting legacies to the world are the amazing monuments constructed during his reign and in his honour. These include the temple at Abu Simbel and Ramesseum, his official memorial temple. These actions may have been entirely self-serving, celebrating only his might in the world, but they ensured that people thousands of years later would know more about this magnificent civilisation, as well as Ramesses himself.

1303-1213 BCE

NATIONALITY
EGYPTIAN

LEGACY
THE LONGEST-RULING PHARAOH, HE CONQUERED NEW LANDS AND BUILT AMAZING CONSTRUCTIONS



While Ramesses II was alive he was the most powerful man on the planet

Oliver Cromwell

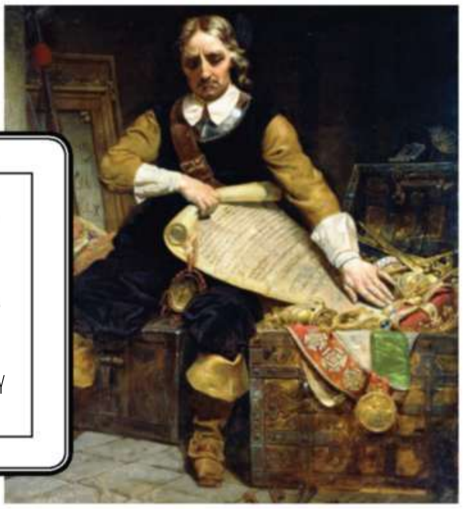
Britain's Lord Protector

After entering the English Civil War of 1642-1651 on the side of the parliamentarians (commonly known as the roundheads after the shape of the helmets they usually wore) Cromwell was swiftly promoted from a cavalry troop leader to one of the side's most important generals. Also a prominent member of the English Parliament, he was one of the signatories on the death warrant of King Charles I. He ruled as Lord Protector of England from 1653 until his death and was succeeded by his son.

1599-1658

NATIONALITY
ENGLISH

LEGACY
DEFEATED KING CHARLES I AND BRIEFLY TURNED ENGLAND AWAY FROM BEING A MONARCHY



Joseph II

Ensured his citizens were educated

This Holy Roman Emperor (leader of the lands in central Europe and modern Germany) is known as one of the great Enlightenment monarchs. He reformed the legal system – banning brutal punishments and the death penalty – gave legal freedom to serfs and made elementary education compulsory for all boys and girls in an attempt to create a literate citizenry.

Martin Luther King

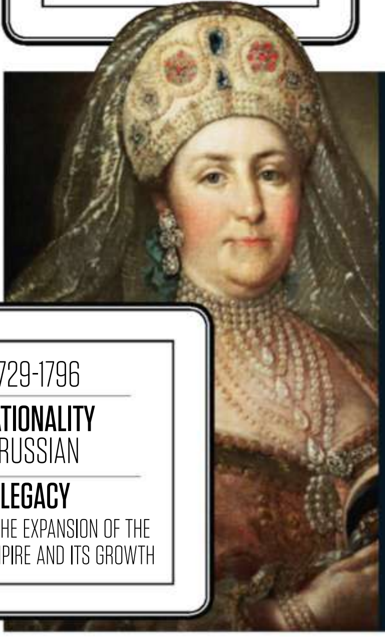
One of the greatest leaders of the 20th century

An activist and revolutionary in the civil rights movement for African Americans, King spent most of his life fighting for the rights of black people in a peaceful way, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts and his 'I have dream' speech, which has inspired generations of leaders after him.

1929-1968

NATIONALITY
AMERICAN

LEGACY
INSPIRED A WHOLE GENERATION IN HIS STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS



Catherine the Great

An artistic ruler who modernised Russia

The longest-ruling female leader of Russia, Catherine II presided over a golden period for the country in which it greatly expanded its territory through military victories, most notably against the Ottoman Empire. It wasn't just military success that marked her rule but the modernisation of the country and her patronage of the arts.

1729-1796

NATIONALITY
RUSSIAN

LEGACY
OVERSAW THE EXPANSION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND ITS GROWTH

Kim Il-sung

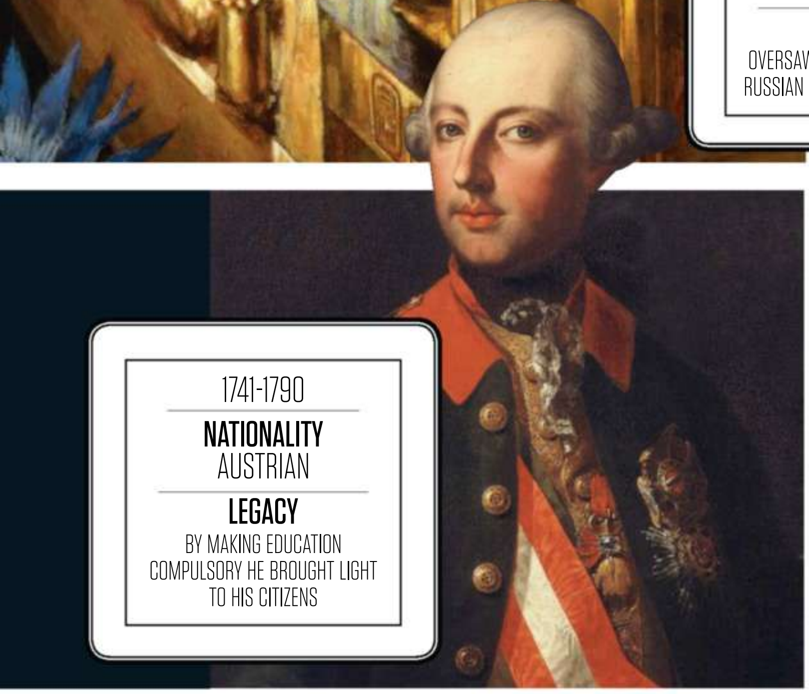
North Korea's ruthless dictator

Following WWII and the expulsion of the Japanese, another battle raged in Korea – between the north and the south. Kim Il-sung was the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and tried to take the south in 1948. He failed, but did establish North Korea as a dictatorship under his iron grip. The country is currently ruled by his grandson.

1912-1994

NATIONALITY
NORTH KOREAN

LEGACY
ESTABLISHED NORTH KOREA AS A COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP



1741-1790

NATIONALITY
AUSTRIAN

LEGACY
BY MAKING EDUCATION COMPULSORY HE BROUGHT LIGHT TO HIS CITIZENS

© Corbis; Getty; Alamy; Mary Evans

LEADERS AT WAR

The men and women who fought for power and control, who built armies and empires to rule the world

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The incredible story of two warriors and their desire to defeat the other

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How did the Führer's military leadership affect the outcome of World War II?

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Discover how this nomad built one of the largest empires ever seen

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Learn about 'Harald the Ruthless' and uncover the story behind his attempt to reclaim lands, power and culture

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The teenage martyr who led the French army against the English, and would go down in history as a saint

WorldMags

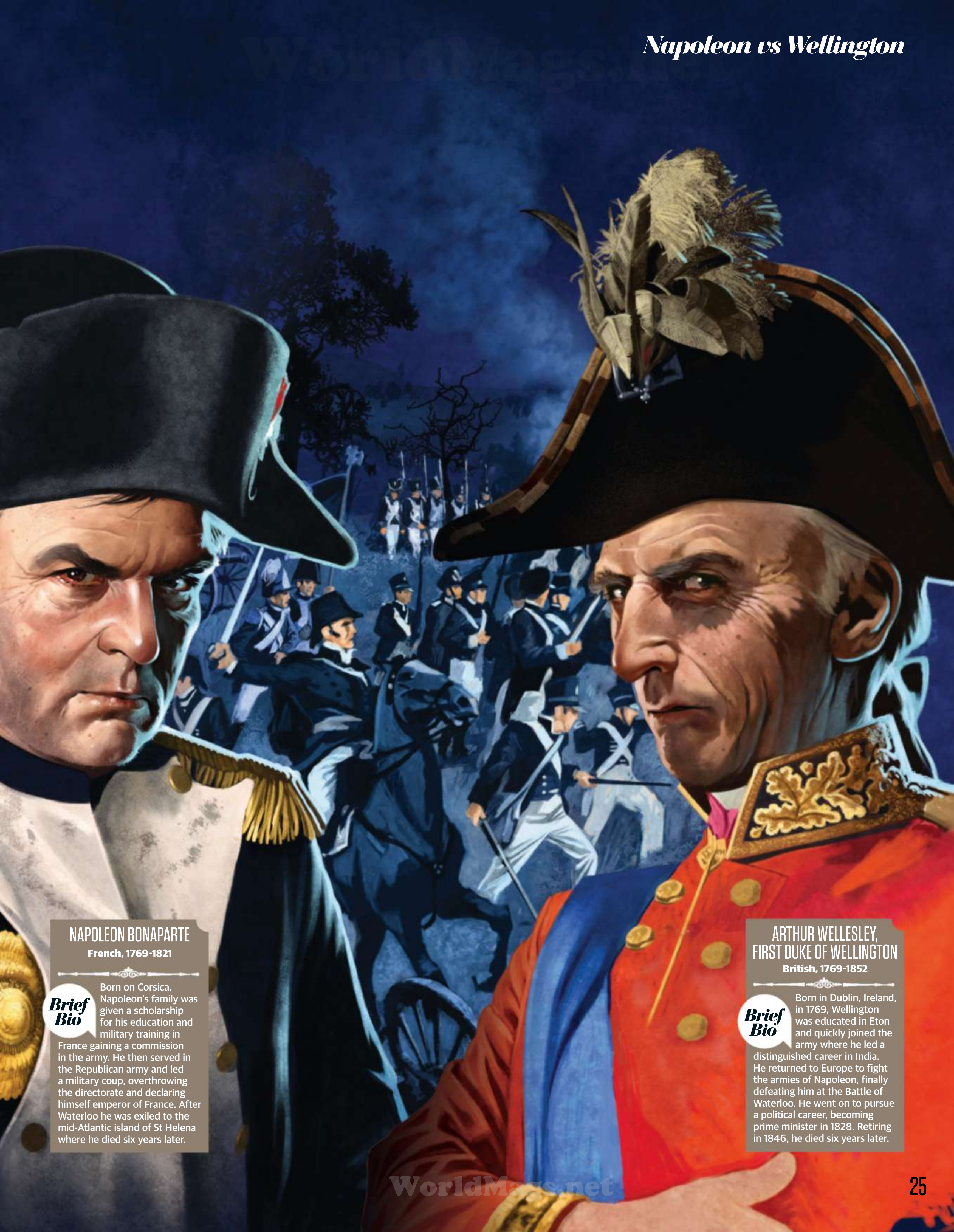
Napoleon vs Wellington

The epic story of two warriors and their personal battle that would decide the fate of empires

As the smoke from cannon and musket fire over the fields of Waterloo lifted, the fate of Europe had been decided. Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, had defeated his nemesis, Napoleon Bonaparte – who had single-handedly plunged Europe into war.

Sitting on his horse, looking out as the Sun was setting on a landscape of the dead, dying and wounded, Wellington felt neither triumph nor joy. Rather, a sense of disappointment surrounded the leader who'd overseen the destruction of Napoleon's war machine. In grim reflection the general declared, "Damn the fellow, he is a mere pounder after all!" Napoleon's reputation had preceeded him and it was found wanting. Everything Wellington had heard about Napoleon – his tactical genius, his skill in manoeuvring, his ability to read the battlefield – had all turned out to be false. He was merely a pounder, one who just threw more and more men onto British guns to be shot down. Their rivalry had killed thousands, their personalities had fascinated and repulsed each other in equal measure. But which of these great military commanders would really best the other in terms of legacy?

Oddly enough the two had never met in battle before Waterloo, but their lives had transcended through coincidence and circumstance in the years leading up to 1815. Both men were born in the same year and would be seen as outcasts by their countrymen, Wellington growing up in Ireland,



NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

French, 1769-1821

Brief Bio

Born on Corsica, Napoleon's family was given a scholarship for his education and military training in France gaining a commission in the army. He then served in the Republican army and led a military coup, overthrowing the directorate and declaring himself emperor of France. After Waterloo he was exiled to the mid-Atlantic island of St Helena where he died six years later.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY, FIRST DUKE OF WELLINGTON

British, 1769-1852

Brief Bio

Born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1769, Wellington was educated in Eton and quickly joined the army where he led a distinguished career in India. He returned to Europe to fight the armies of Napoleon, finally defeating him at the Battle of Waterloo. He went on to pursue a political career, becoming prime minister in 1828. Retiring in 1846, he died six years later.

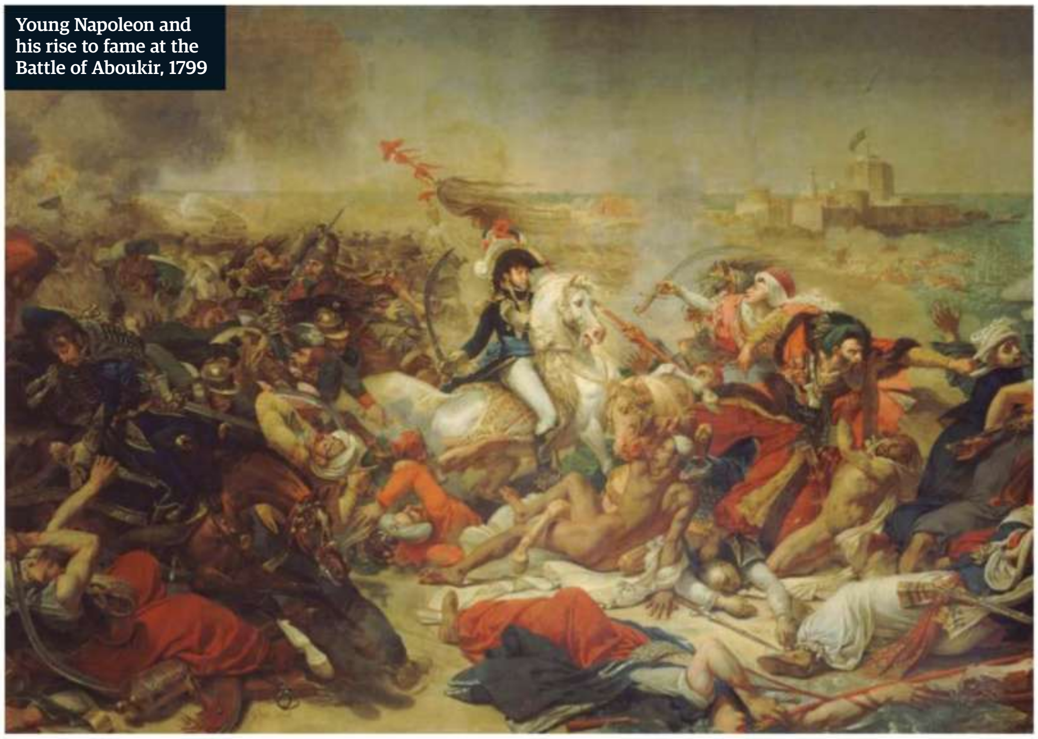
Napoleon in Corsica – far from the cosmopolitan power hubs of Britain and France, respectively.

Wellington was luckier however; his family was rich and had connections. He could afford to be sent to private school and to buy himself a commission in the army. He continued up the ranks by buying authority, an approach viewed favourably by his family who often regarded him as a 'dreamy, idle and shy lad' – a far cry from the warrior that history remembers.

Napoleon, on the other hand, could not afford such a prestigious position so quickly. His family was awarded enough money for him to attend a school in Autun, France, and then a military academy where his first command was an artillery detachment; it was a stark contrast to the glamorous assignments in India Wellington had enjoyed.

This was the classic story of the noble gaining rewards through connections, while the impoverished bourgeoisie struggled, through hard work, to gain recognition and it would dominate the two men's ideologies in later life. Wellington's formative years had made him reliant on the establishment and the noble network of patronage, while Napoleon was a child of enlightenment ideals, acquiring worth through hard graft and the need for recognition for all he had gained. Both men were ambitious but this ambition was funnelled through different class backgrounds: one emphasising establishment, the other a new and changing world view.

> "His ambition and fiery personality shattered countries and brought forth a new order"



Young Napoleon and his rise to fame at the Battle of Aboukir, 1799

Revolution, radical upheaval and the guillotine would force them to pick sides in the wars that were spreading like wildfire across Europe. Napoleon witnessed the French mob overrunning the royal family's palace at Tuileries, murdering the Swiss Guards as they surrendered. As the mob tore the palace apart, he marvelled at the power of the French people at their most motivated; he would make sure that the soldiers in his armies never lost this idealistic enthusiasm. To Napoleon the French Revolution was the hope for 'right thinkers' and the 'centuries of feudal barbarism and political slavery' would end in France as the light of liberty swept through the nation.

Wellington took an opposing view, noting in his diary: 'the Revolution, as it is called… has rather augmented the evil by bringing forward into public employment of importance, more inexperienced people… entirely incompatible with the nature of their business'. To him, the French Revolution and the terror that followed represented what would happen in Britain if society did not keep the man on the street in check. These views would harden as France rejected monarchical power for ever, Napoleon embracing the new regime as the next step in civilisation, while Wellington speculated that it would destroy civilised society.

The radical ideals instilled in Napoleon in his early life came to the fore during the years of military campaign. He grew tired of the corrupt nature of the French directorate which took over from the monarchy, declaring himself consul and then emperor in 1804. His ambition and fiery personality shattered countries and brought forth a new order – his order. The men serving under him loved his grandstanding and followed 'him cheerfully barefooted, and without provisions. Such was the enthusiasm, or rather the fanaticism, which Napoleon could inspire among his troops', as memoirs from his German campaigns recorded.

Wellington fought him by proxy, through his armies in Spain and, reflecting his desire for established order, drilled and flogged his ragtag army of demoralised British, Portuguese and Spanish troops turning them into a force

Head to head Politics

WELLINGTON

Policies ★★★☆☆
Staying power ★★★★☆
Legacy ★★★☆☆
Overall ★★★☆☆

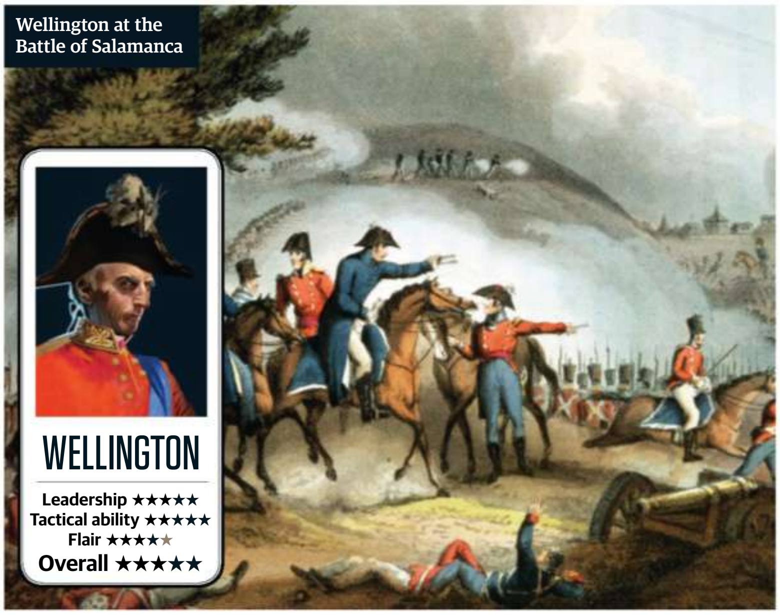
In his twilight years, Napoleon said that his Napoleonic Code – a codified set of laws protecting civil liberties and property rights – was his greatest achievement since his battles would be forgotten after Waterloo. Indeed, it changed France for ever and they still exist today in the French legal system as well as several other legal systems around Europe – his reformist ideals and vision for a new society outlasting him. The passion to reform that drove Napoleon was not present in Wellington. As a loyal part of the British establishment he clung to the British political structure with what he described as 'unhesitating zeal and cheerfulness'. He reacted against a number of liberal reforms including the Catholic Relief Act, which was designed to give Catholics more political representation in England. He also opposed the parliamentary Reform Act during his first tenure as prime minister (1828-1830) – an act that would have given greater democratic weight to the House of Commons. His uncompromising view that conservatism was the only way to prevent the guillotine appearing in Piccadilly and the threat from the common people whom he saw as 'rotten to the core' would eventually call an end to his political career when a new era of liberalism overtook British politics and society in general.

NAPOLEON

Policies ★★★★★
Staying power ★★★★☆
Legacy ★★★★☆
Overall ★★★★☆

Greatest Military Masterpiece

Battle of Salamanca



Wellington at the Battle of Salamanca

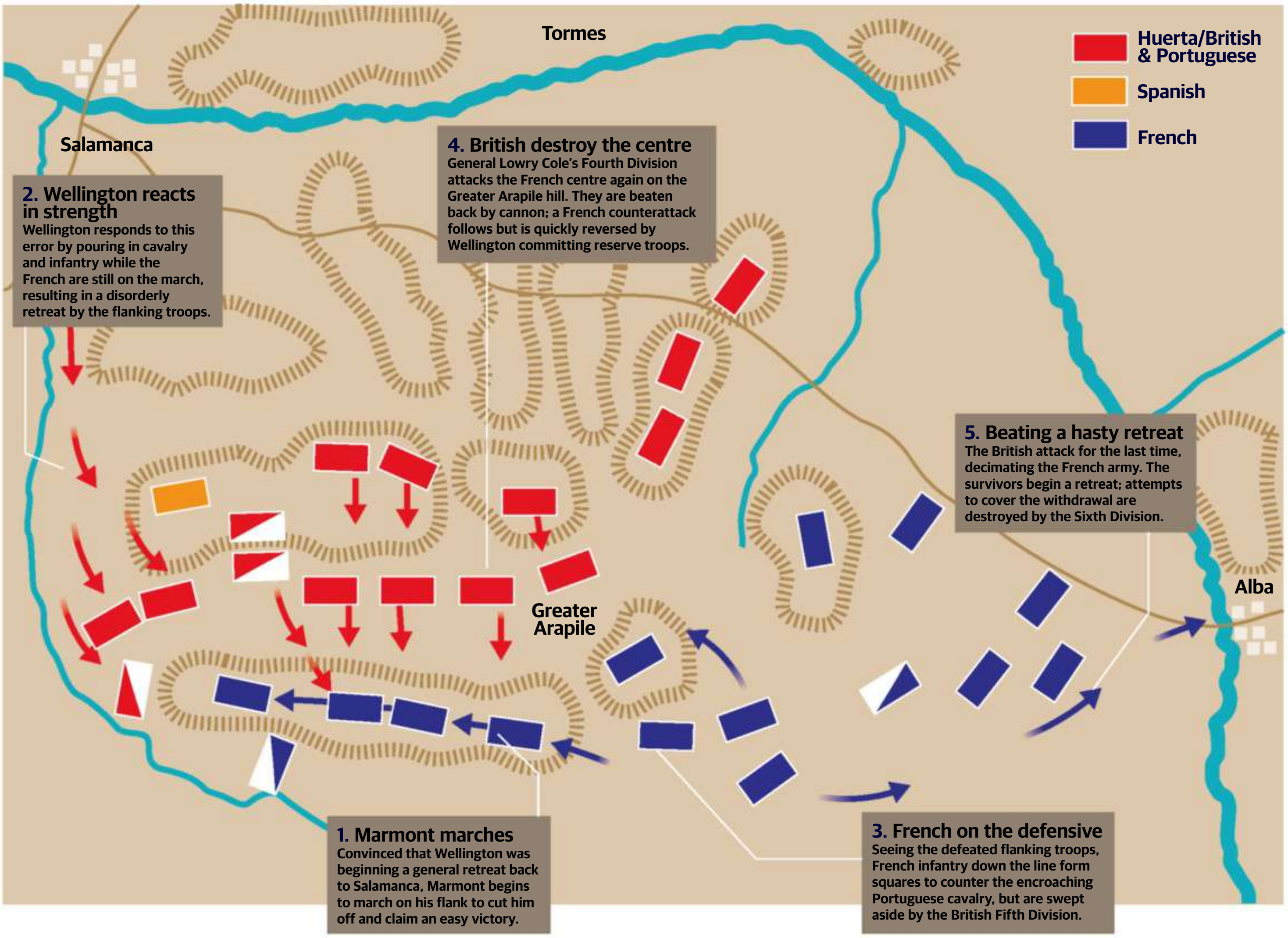
WELLINGTON

Leadership ★★★★★
Tactical ability ★★★★★
Flair ★★★★☆
Overall ★★★★★

The Battle of Salamanca was fought in the fog of war, the endless cannon and musket fire patching the air with thick black smoke. It was a battle that exemplified Wellington's ability in the attack and put to rest the rumours that he was the master of the defensive battle only.

By 1812 Wellington had crossed over the Portuguese border capturing the Spanish town of Salamanca. A French army under Marshal Auguste-Frédéric de Marmont was waiting. Wary of the French numbers, Wellington waited for them to make the first move. In a critical miscalculation, Marmont mistook the British baggage train moving back as a general retreat. Too eager to claim Salamanca for his emperor, he shifted his forces to swing round to the west in an attempt to cut off the British before they fell back.

Wellington seized his opportunity, ordering a huge assault on the head of the flanking French forces, while they were still marching into position. The French were stunned, hundreds cut down from sabre wounds or shot. At the same time the French divisions facing Wellington in the centre had become dangerously weak because of the shift west. Wellington ordered another assault on their positions, causing the French to pull back with cavalry crashing down on the survivors. Panic swept across the French line, while divisions on the right held on; the French command – including Marmont himself – had been wounded in the attack. Confusion reigned until a French counterattack was beaten back forcing the French to retreat. It was a battle that more than proved Wellington's martial abilities.



🟥 Huerta/British & Portuguese
🟧 Spanish
🟦 French

1. Marmont marches
Convinced that Wellington was beginning a general retreat back to Salamanca, Marmont begins to march on his flank to cut him off and claim an easy victory.

2. Wellington reacts in strength
Wellington responds to this error by pouring in cavalry and infantry while the French are still on the march, resulting in a disorderly retreat by the flanking troops.

3. French on the defensive
Seeing the defeated flanking troops, French infantry down the line form squares to counter the encroaching Portuguese cavalry, but are swept aside by the British Fifth Division.

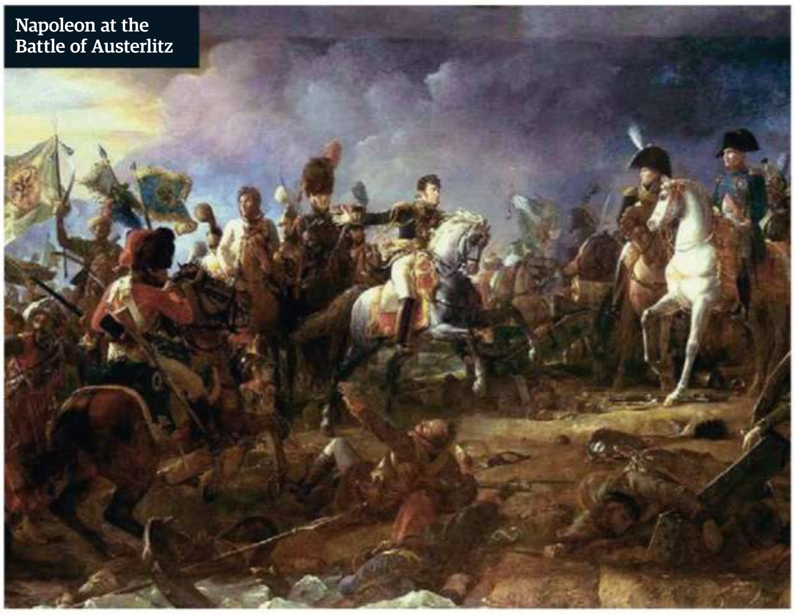
4. British destroy the centre
General Lowry Cole's Fourth Division attacks the French centre again on the Greater Arapile hill. They are beaten back by cannon; a French counterattack follows but is quickly reversed by Wellington committing reserve troops.

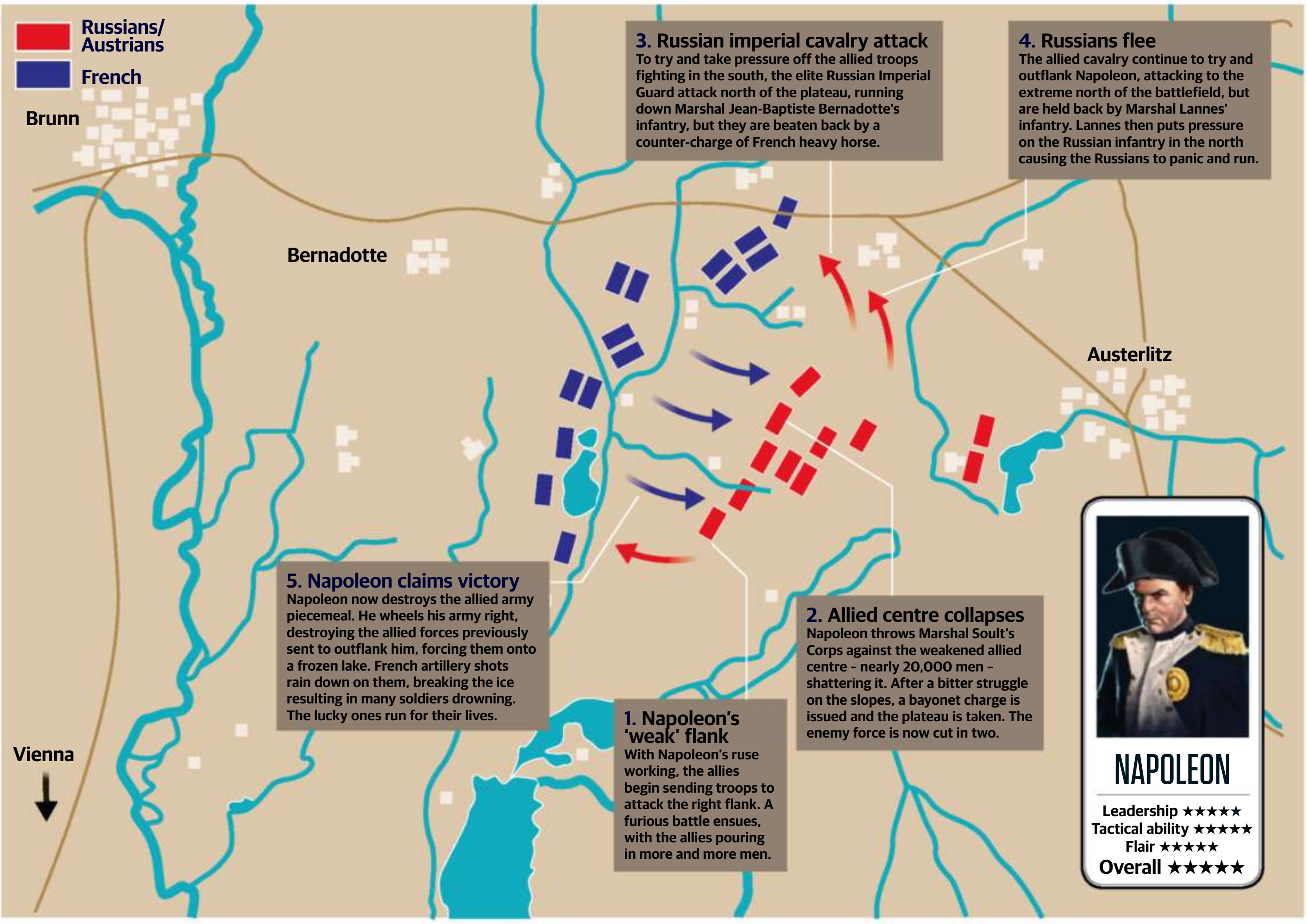
5. Beating a hasty retreat
The British attack for the last time, decimating the French army. The survivors begin a retreat; attempts to cover the withdrawal are destroyed by the Sixth Division.

Greatest Military Masterpiece

Battle of Austerlitz

The Battle of Austerlitz was a masterclass in deception and manoeuvre. In the winter of 1805 Napoleon's Grande Armée faced off against the combined might of the emperor of Russia, Alexander I, and General Karl Mack, Baron von Leiberich of Austria. The three armies met near Austerlitz for a showdown in arms. The Russian and Austrian allies occupied the Pratzen Plateau to act as their central position and, after receiving intelligence that Napoleon's flank was weak, they struck south, towards the French right to cut them off from Vienna. This attack was repulsed by a French force in strength – something the allies were not expecting. As the allies threw in more men to reinforce the southern attack, the allied position on the plateau started to weaken from the drain in manpower. Napoleon was overjoyed; it was all going according to plan. By making the enemy command think his flank was weak, the allies were funnelling troops away from the strategically vital plateau leaving it open to attack. The ensuing French assault was so ferocious that it sent the allies into a panic, shattering their line and cutting the allied army in half. Repeated attacks north of the plateau could not push the French away from the central position, leaving Napoleon to clean up. In blind panic, allied soldiers originally sent to flank Napoleon ran over the frozen ponds south of their positions as French artillery fire broke the ice. Many of the wounded were trampled and drowned in the icy waters. It was a masterstroke of deception, Napoleon essentially using his own flank as bait to draw his opponents to their deaths.


Napoleon at the Battle of Austerlitz



1. Napoleon's 'weak' flank
With Napoleon's ruse working, the allies begin sending troops to attack the right flank. A furious battle ensues, with the allies pouring in more and more men.

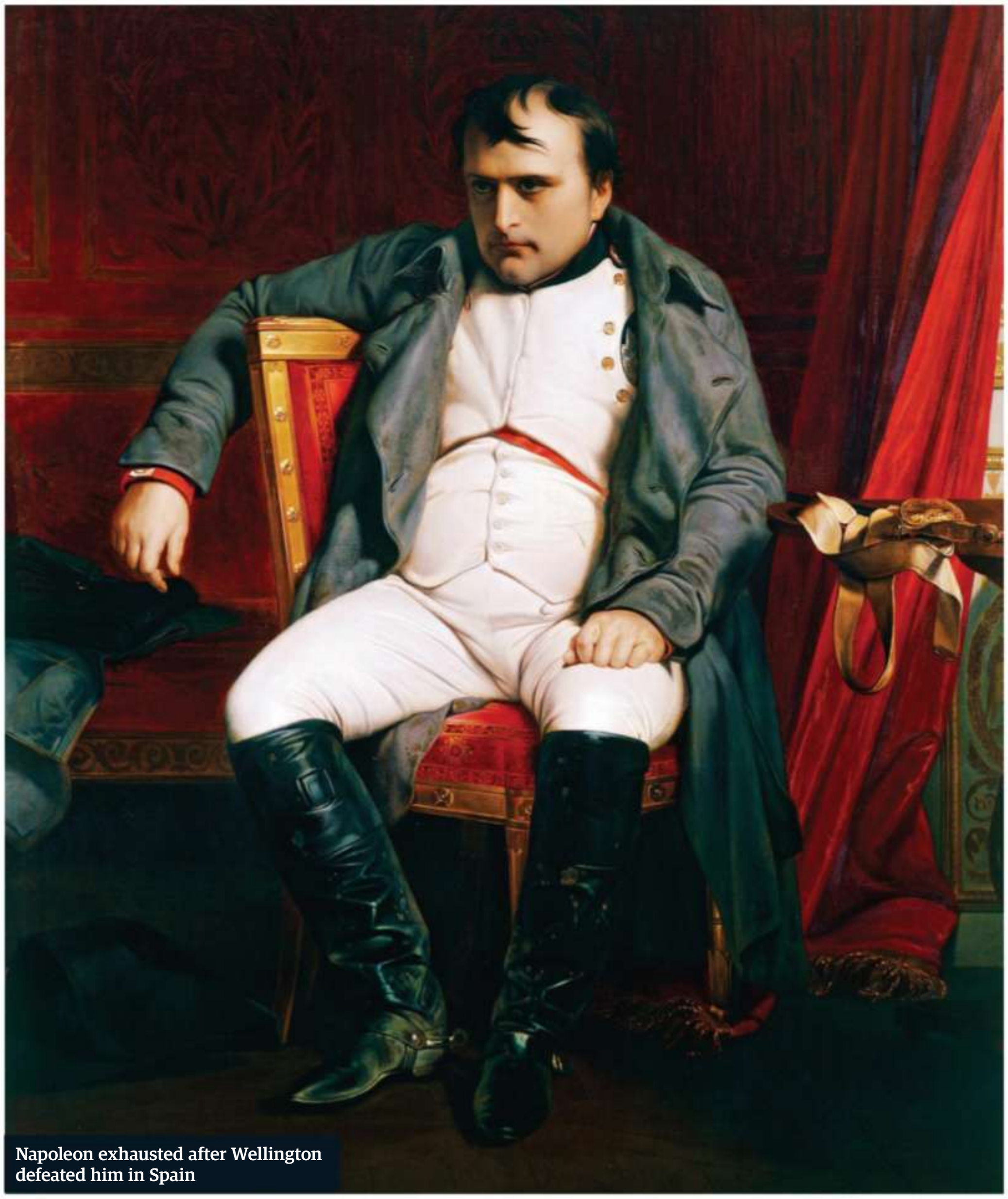
2. Allied centre collapses
Napoleon throws Marshal Soult's Corps against the weakened allied centre – nearly 20,000 men – shattering it. After a bitter struggle on the slopes, a bayonet charge is issued and the plateau is taken. The enemy force is now cut in two.

3. Russian imperial cavalry attack
To try and take pressure off the allied troops fighting in the south, the elite Russian Imperial Guard attack north of the plateau, running down Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte's infantry, but they are beaten back by a counter-charge of French heavy horse.

4. Russians flee
The allied cavalry continue to try and outflank Napoleon, attacking to the extreme north of the battlefield, but are held back by Marshal Lannes' infantry. Lannes then puts pressure on the Russian infantry in the north causing the Russians to panic and run.

5. Napoleon claims victory
Napoleon now destroys the allied army piecemeal. He wheels his army right, destroying the allied forces previously sent to outflank him, forcing them onto a frozen lake. French artillery shots rain down on them, breaking the ice resulting in many soldiers drowning. The lucky ones run for their lives.

NAPOLEON
Leadership ★★★★★
Tactical ability ★★★★★
Flair ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★



Napoleon exhausted after Wellington defeated him in Spain

© Look and Learn; Getty; Joe Cummings; Alamy

that could win battles. It was two very different command styles and publicly the leaders would sneer and berate each other.

Napoleon would bite at Wellington's early career in India claiming that he was nothing more than a 'sepoy general', good at looking grand in exotic palaces but not at much else. While his adversary would lambaste Napoleon as a dictator claiming that everything he did carried an element of meanness. He ridiculed Napoleon's power claiming that 'Napoleon's power stands upon corruption, that he has no [admirers] in France but the principal officers of his army'.

In private and to select friends, however, these explosive attitudes were very different. After the Battle of Toulouse in 1814, Napoleon complimented the military talents of Wellington and the bravery of his troops to a select group of officers. For Wellington the emotions ran deeper still, acquiring a huge bust of Napoleon so he could look him in the eyes during his years in England. He commented, "I would at any time rather have heard that a reinforcement of 40,000 men had joined the French army, than that he had arrived to take command." This mix of emotions betrays a fascination that both men held for each other – the radical differences in political and ideological beliefs attracting both to comment on one another's actions, even to the point where Wellington felt he needed to be around his opponent at all times, making space in his home for his rival – albeit a plaster likeness.

Love and romantic intrigue was never far away from dashing military officers commanding the armies of empires. The personal lives of both the generals presented a mixture of triumphs and defeats as dramatic as any of their exploits on the battlefield; their love life also had a lasting influence on them personally.

Wellington married out of duty to a woman he had previously confessed his love to, Catherine Pakenham, in 1806. Wellington found his wife's depressive nature and her inability to keep track of her spending extremely frustrating. Given his tight-lipped nature, he quickly became estranged from her and, as rumour would have it, took a mistress – Harriet Arbuthnot. Arbuthnot later commented on a portrait of Wellington in civilian clothes describing it as something others rarely saw – a 'softness and sweetness of countenance'. If Wellington was in love though, he rarely let his passions show, especially in public.

As the polar opposite to this hard outward exterior, Napoleon – now in post-revolutionary France – married his sweetheart, Joséphine de Beauharnais. Napoleon loved his new wife fiercely; it was said that few women possessed more charm

Head to head Leadership

WELLINGTON

Military ★★★★★
Popularity ★★★☆☆
Charisma ★★★★☆
Overall ★★★★☆

It goes without saying that both Napoleon and Wellington had considerable command ability and the military skill of these men changed the course of history, but their approach differed considerably. Wellington was renowned for his reliance on strict discipline – something which he saw as the key to victory. He once commented in 1813 that his troops were the 'scum of the Earth', unmotivated and little more than criminals which he would train and drill, turning them into heroes. To the average British soldier he was a terrifying figure and life within his army was a harsh routine of endless drills, training and floggings. While Wellington may have gained prestige as a great general in the palaces of government, his men would not thank him for their experiences. By contrast to this iron discipline, Napoleon preferred to grandiose himself in front of his troops to inspire them to great deeds of courage. The French soldier – already stirred by the great events of the French Revolution – would cheer and chant "Vive l'Empereur!" during army reviews – the passionate, hot-blooded nature of Napoleon standing in contrast to the cold, conservative nature of Wellington's stiff upper lip. Napoleon would capitalise on this enthusiasm through many a conquest with his adoring and loyal troops.

NAPOLEON

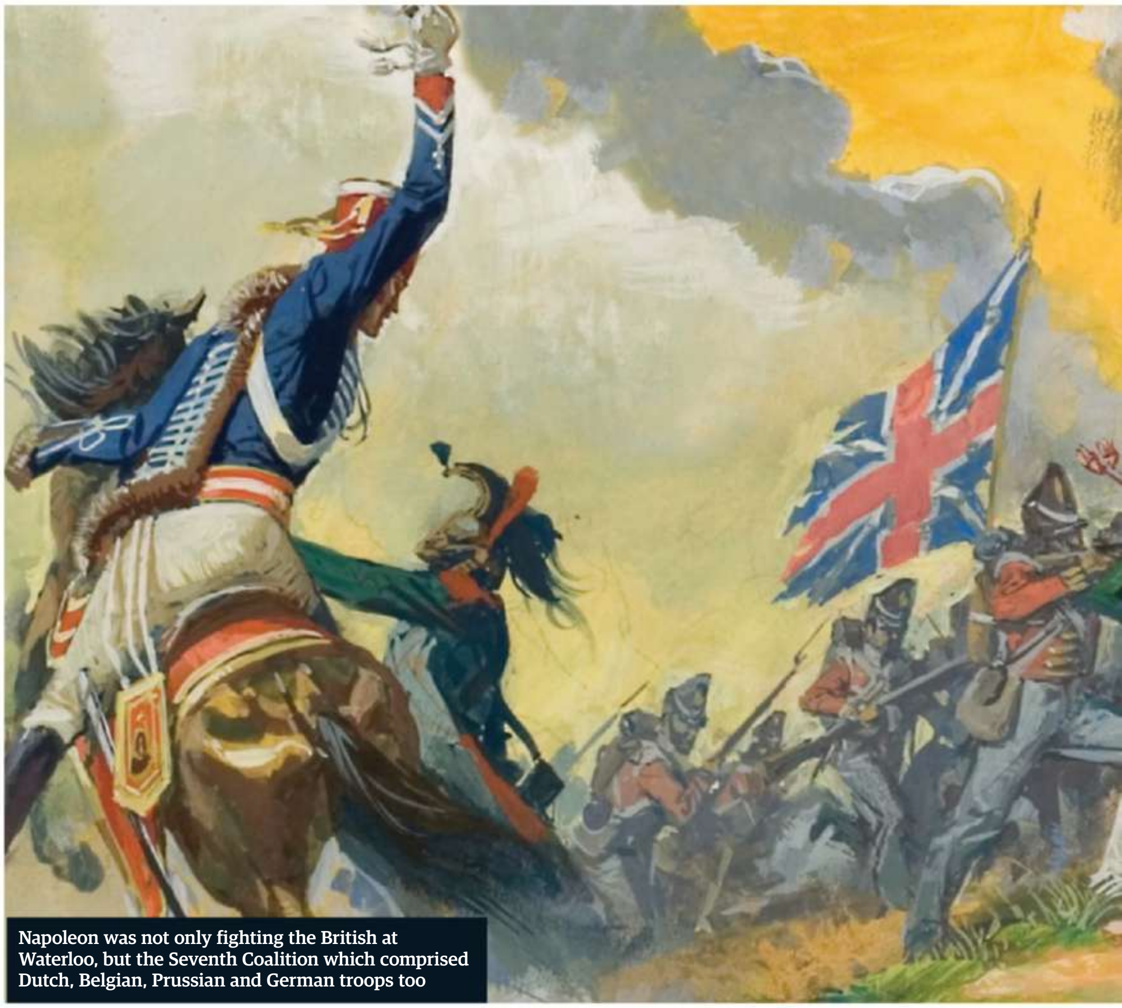
Military ★★★★☆
Popularity ★★★★★
Charisma ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

> "Napoleon decided to roll the dice one last time in an attempt to take ultimate power"

and his love letters were famously graphic for the time. In one passionate exchange he pledged to give her a thousand kisses, but he tells Joséphine to 'give me none, for they fire my blood'.

A commentator speculated that one of the main factors that drove his aggressive nature in battle was to impress her through his military skill. This love was not to last, however. In a painful exchange of letters to his brother sent when he was on campaign in Egypt, he discovered that Joséphine was being unfaithful. When he heard the news he convulsed and banged his fists against his head, leading him to become despondent about life and the people around him. He divorced in 1810, after a string of mistresses that were designed to exact revenge on Joséphine's betrayal. The lovesick Napoleon found little consolation in his second wife, Marie-Louise Archduchess of Austria, who he would describe as 'a walking womb' for political advancement.

Both men were rather unlucky in love, but there is a critical difference in this respect: Napoleon's personal life almost destroyed his ambition and shook him to his very core, whereas Wellington kept his emotions in check, befitting his very English upbringing.



Napoleon was not only fighting the British at Waterloo, but the Seventh Coalition which comprised Dutch, Belgian, Prussian and German troops too

Military defeats, political setbacks and the invasion of France by Britain and its allies forced Napoleon to abdicate his throne and be exiled to Elba, a small island in the Mediterranean. A few days before he left for Elba, he wrote a letter to the woman he had never stopped loving, Joséphine: 'Never forget him who never forgot, and who never will forget you'.

This was a man who was reflecting on his defeats and heartbreak. As a final humiliation he was allowed to keep the title of emperor – emperor of a tiny Mediterranean island with a population numbering no more than 12,000. Joséphine never visited him on Elba; she would die in 1814 while Napoleon was in exile, compounding his woe. He kept himself busy ushering in a number of reforms on the island for the benefit of its populace, but often he launched into vicious tirades and depressive rants, saying that his generals had betrayed him, that he had trusted the wrong people, that he had lost everything.

Head to head Legacy

WELLINGTON

Military ★★★★★
Political ★★☆☆☆
Fame ★★★☆☆
Overall ★★★☆☆

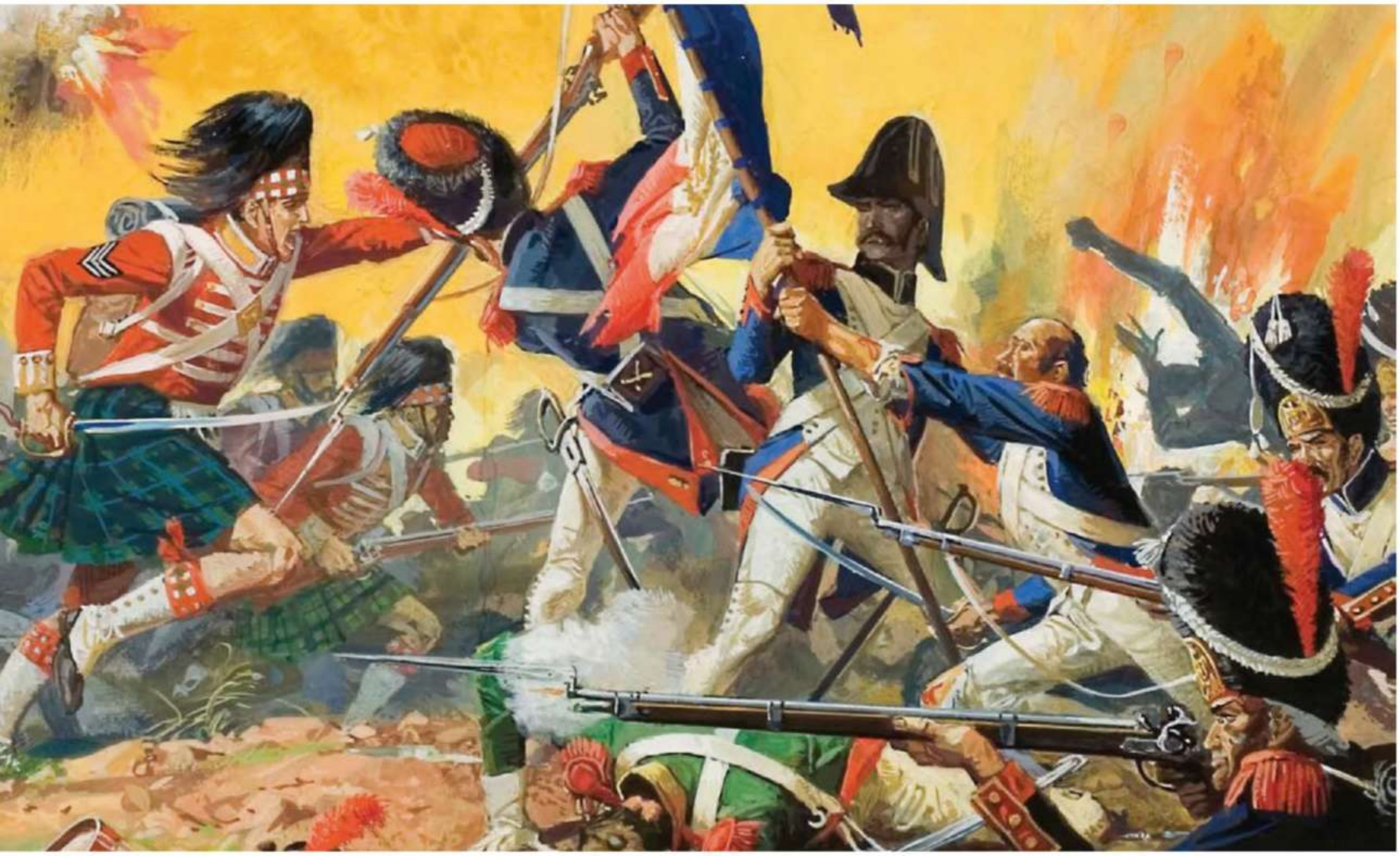
Wellington's cold ambition, his unemotional nature and his unflinching resolve are what we often remember, hence his alias: the Iron Duke. He was the great military hero who stoically defied the tyrannical ambitions of the 'evil' Napoleon and, through British ingenuity, checked the Grande Armée by beating it at its own game. What is forgotten is the sacrifice of British troops, the great reverses in fortune and the unrelenting conservatism which undid his political career. For Napoleon it is often seen the other way round. His defeats are remembered, the tragic story of his exile to St Helena is emphasised, and his invasions of countless countries are condemned as warmongering. One could argue that, since he lost everything in a spectacular final gamble at Waterloo, it is Wellington who ultimately wins the battle of legacy. But a closer look at the political scene post-Waterloo tells a different story. Napoleon's victories in countries like Spain, Prussia and the Italian states brought with them enlightenment ideals of a codified system of law guaranteeing the rights of the citizen as well as democratic principles – albeit under French domination – to countries that previously existed under the yoke of dictatorial monarchies. These laws would live on, and so would Napoleon.

NAPOLEON

Military ★★★★☆
Political ★★★★★
Fame ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

By contrast, Wellington was triumphant. He travelled to Paris having been made a duke and, in a show of power, was appointed the British ambassador to France. He took in the delights of Paris – now an exciting, free city, met his mistress in romantic Parisian suburbs and was lauded as a true British hero at home. He continued to write his memoirs, but grew tired of journalists and authors, especially when rumours circulated about his private life.

It was the confidence that Wellington gained after 1814 and the depressive self-reflection that Napoleon went through on Elba



that would dictate the epic battle that would leave one of them standing victorious a year later.

After sensing that the restored royal power in France was weakening, Napoleon decided to roll the dice one last time in an attempt to take ultimate power. In a daring escape he slipped away from his guards and, with help from his loyal followers, sailed to the French mainland for a final reckoning with Wellington. At Waterloo, the personalities, the war of words, the endless studying and critiquing of each other's abilities came to bear in the heat of battle.

Napoleon believed totally in his troops; his soldiers had conquered everything in the early years of that century and, in his eyes, this battle should have been no different. Yet at Waterloo his judgement was impaired; there was no signature masterstroke as seen at Austerlitz in 1805. The year in exile, the loss of his beloved Joséphine and the trauma of losing his empire had finally broken his ability to read the battlefield, causing the edifice of his military genius to crumble.

His physical health was also frail after the stresses of the last ten years; he was suffering from crippling stomach pain which prevented him from ordering his troops clearly. Instead of attacking straight away he dithered, initially afraid to lose his army which was the only thing giving him legitimacy. He then changed his mind, committing himself to head-on attacks into British muskets and cannon. Rather than being in control of his ambition he was blinded by it – his lust to win and regain his power overriding his skills in directing the battle.

Wellington described Waterloo as a 'pounding match', but Wellington was wrong. Napoleon was not merely a pounder; it was his personal defeats taking their toll. He was a desperate man – desperate to silence his critics and become emperor again – no matter the cost.

Wellington took advantage of his adversary's unhinged emotional state. He had the confidence, having defeated the troops of Napoleon before, he had the charisma having gained glory and fame in England after liberating Portugal and Spain, and he had the will to win. In the end the Iron Duke's steady, iron temperament had outlasted the reckless, up-and-down personality of Napoleon.

Like a tragic character in a Greek epic, Napoleon had claimed his empire, had been defeated and now suffered indignity in enforced exile – this time for good. His ambition had ultimately bested him, losing to a man who had never overplayed his hand in his quest for power.

The former emperor's bitterness was chronicled in his memoirs which he wrote during his time on the Atlantic island of St Helena, claiming that Wellington's plan at Waterloo 'will not in the eyes of the historian reflect any credit on Lord Wellington as a general… [H]is plan did not show talent.' He did, however, praise the bravery and firmness of Wellington's troops.

On the surface, it would be easy for Wellington to claim the strongest legacy given the victories he achieved and dismiss Napoleon as nothing more than a sore loser. Yet Wellington's triumphs only gave to him what British society would allow him to gain. In the end his political career after Waterloo fell to pieces because the establishment – which he had given his lifeblood to protect – no longer tolerated him. Napoleon had created from scratch his own establishment in the form of his European empire which, at its height, stretched from Spain to the gates of Moscow. His lust for life and liberty, plus his passion for a better world that he would preside over, were his raison d'être.

He once said that the invasion of Russia would make him 'master of the world'. Not content to be handed what others were willing to give him, Napoleon wanted the world for himself. His power wasn't to last, but nevertheless his ambition presents a striking image of aspiration since through sheer force of will he fought to have it all.

Hitler at War

To what extent did the Führer's military leadership style affect the outcome of World War II? Discover the expert verdict on Adolf Hitler's tactical prowess

Since the fall of the Third Reich in 1945, our verdict on Hitler's leadership has mostly come from the pens and mouths of his generals. Many of these men had grown to resent their former leader, and with the fall of Germany they seized the opportunity to criticise and embarrass the Führer at every opportunity. But beneath the façade of slander and betrayal, was Hitler's military leadership style truly so unpopular – and to what extent did his decisions determine the outcome of World War II?

"So much of what we thought we knew about Hitler for many years came from his generals, and they have a lot of reasons to either consciously or unconsciously falsify what happened," says Dr Geoffrey Megargee. "They more or less accused him of starting the war against their advice and then of losing it through his meddling, but that doesn't really give us an accurate picture."

When Germany declared war on Poland on 1 September 1939, they had not expected to encounter such fierce opposition from Britain and France. After both countries declared war on the Third Reich in response, the German population were distraught; World War I was still fresh in the nation's memory, and the country had only just started to thrive again from the harsh penalties imposed after their defeat in 1918 and later the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Now the leader of the Nazi party was dragging them into another war against familiar foes. Despite his popularity, Hitler was not immune to criticism and the start of World War II saw a significant drop in morale in Germany.

But that all changed when France fell in just a matter of weeks to Germany's Blitzkrieg tactics. According to Dr Megargee, "Once France was knocked out of the war, I suspect at that point Hitler probably reached about the high point of his popularity with the German population because Germany had just managed to defeat in a matter of weeks this enemy that had defeated them over four years of combat in World War I. That was quite a coup."

Riding on this success, Hitler quickly involved himself in all aspects of the operations of the German army – much more so than the respective leaders of other countries. He was known for an attention to detail that was interfering at best, and detrimental at worst. "Hitler was in charge of strategy from the start, figuring out against whom Germany was going to fight, and his decisions were not nearly so unpopular as [his generals] tried to say later on.

"They were all in favour of starting a war against Poland, they were all in favour of starting a war against the Soviet Union – these were not unpopular decisions on Hitler's part.

▶

"But when we get down to the next level of warfare – operations, ie planning and conducting campaigns – here Hitler was on weaker ground. He had some good insights, and some of his decisions turned out well, but he didn't have any systematic training in this kind of warfare and that showed."

The popular picture of Hitler is of a man that heeded no advice – a leader that would rather listen to his own gut instinct than to the rational arguments of his generals. This was true to an extent; Hitler was distrustful of some of his senior officers, who in turn criticised him for his inexperience in warfare, and he certainly grew more distrustful and erratic as the war progressed.

That being said it was largely the officers themselves that have swayed our view of Hitler's leadership, as they resented his involvement in their military, as Dr Megargee points out. "General [Franz] Halder, for example – who was chief of the general staff from October 1938 to September 1942 – maintained a sort of passive-aggressive relationship with Hitler. He would agree openly with what Hitler had to say, but would then try to work around the decisions that Hitler made." However, for the first few years of the war at least, Hitler relied upon his generals greatly and would seek their advice on both strategy and tactics, albeit some more so than others.

The Führer, though, was not blithely ignorant; he was well aware of the hatred some of his officers felt towards him, and he used this to his advantage at every available opportunity. "He tended to play off commanders against each other. They would throw in their opinions at briefings and he would go with whoever he agreed with, so it was sort of a divide-and-conquer kind of approach to leadership. And once he made up his mind on something he could be extremely stubborn about it."

As mentioned the Führer had an uncanny attention to detail and thus involved himself in the smallest of minutiae about particular units, and many of his generals would be caught short if they could not supply him with precise information – such as, for instance, the number of tanks in a particular division. By 1943 Hitler had started bringing two stenographers (court recorders) to each of his meetings, and although many records were burned at the end of the war, those that survived reveal Hitler's meetings to be intricate to the point that they were discussing the movements of very small units on the front and their equipment.

Hitler's level of involvement was beginning to pose a problem. "You could argue that Hitler was too detailed. When you start talking about how many trucks a particular unit has at its disposal, that's just ridiculous for a head of state to try to interpret as a military commander. There's no way that he can understand the situation well enough to an extent that it's going to make a positive difference on the battlefield." Such was the extent of his attention for detail that by the end of the war almost no major unit was allowed to move without Hitler's permission – especially one on the retreat.

The Invasion of Poland

1-27 September 1939

On 1 September 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland, and just two days later both Britain and France declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

The campaign in Poland was devised by General Franz Halder, chief of the general staff, but it was ultimately Hitler who gave the order to invade. Germany employed Blitzkrieg (which translates as 'lightning war') tactics, denting Poland's front lines with Panzer tanks and aircraft before troops moved through gaps this created0. The approach was hugely successful, although it was not one that Hitler came up with. On 27 September 1939 Poland surrendered, albeit with a Soviet invasion from the east dividing the country.

The effects of this campaign were felt across the globe and signalled the start of World War II. Hitler would go on to employ the same tactics in other countries, including France in 1940.

The expert's view

"If Germany was going to have a war, then September 1939 was probably the best time to attack," says Dr Megargee. "The Allies were getting stronger, so the timing was working against Germany at that point and I think Hitler even said that. But, of course, he was counting on Britain and France to stay out of it. He figured they would let Poland go; he underestimated them on that point."

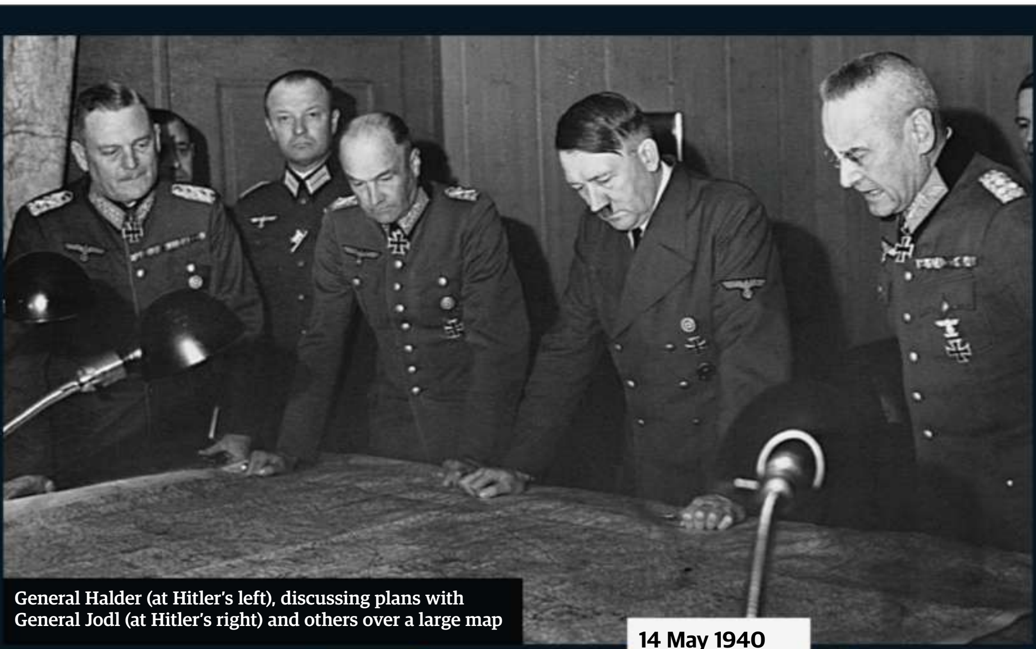
Verdict: Success

"The whole idea of starting the war was a poor strategic decision, but if Hitler was going to start one this was probably the best he could do."

General Franz Halder (left) with General Von Brauchitsch

Hitler watches on as German troops march towards Poland

> "When you start talking about how many trucks a particular unit has at its disposal, that's just ridiculous for a head of state to try to interpret"


General Halder (at Hitler's left), discussing plans with General Jodl (at Hitler's right) and others over a large map

The Fall of France

10 May - 22 June 1940

Resigned to the fact that both Britain and France had declared war, Hitler knew that he needed to nullify France to have any chance of fending off the Allies. So, on 10 May 1940, Germany invaded its Gallic neighbour.

The campaign consisted of two operations. The first was Case Yellow (Fall Gelb), where German forces advanced into the Ardennes region and pushed the Allied forces in Belgium back to the sea. This ultimately resulted in the mass evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk between 26 May and 4 June.

A second operation known as Case Red (Fall Rot) began on 5 June, with Germany's air superiority and armoured units overcoming the depleted French forces. German forces pushed into Paris on 14 June, and by 22 June they had signed an armistice with the French that would see Germany occupy the north and the west of the country until 1944.

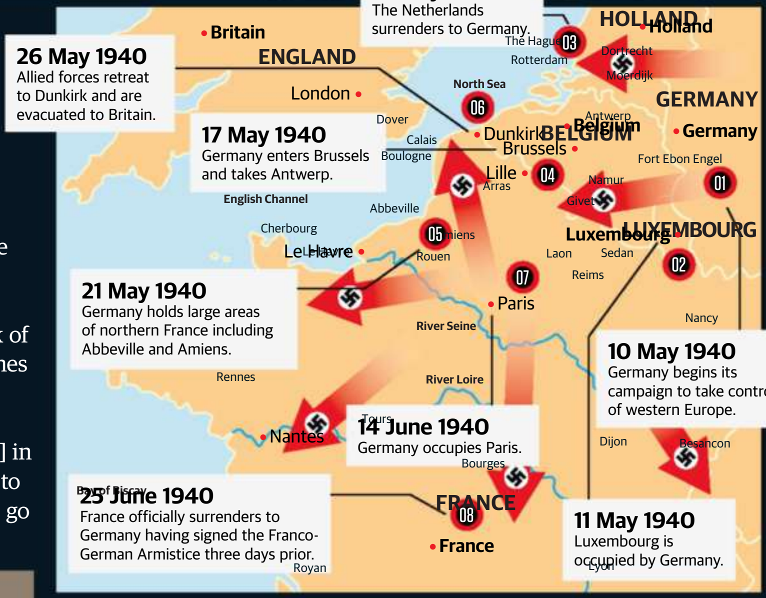
The two major operations were not Hitler's doing. However, it was Hitler that ultimately convinced the German High Command to accept the plan, which undoubtedly was a significant factor in defeating France. The campaign prevented the stalemate that had occurred in World War I, and enabled Germany to begin focusing its attention on other foes.

The expert's view

"Hitler - especially at this stage of the war - was extremely nervous about how it was going to all work out. He was very worried about the left flank of that attack going through the Ardennes to the coast of the English Channel, and he was worried that the French might counterattack. He was [pivotal] in getting the German High Command to accept [Erich von] Manstein's plan to go through the Ardennes."

Verdict: Success

"Hitler had a good instinct to go with what Manstein proposed. Hitler was on the right side of that decision."


Britain
ENGLAND
London
North Sea
Dover
Calais
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English Channel
Abbeville
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Rouen
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Tours
Bourges
Bay of Biscay
Royan
River Seine
River Loire
Paris
FRANCE
France
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The Hague
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Dunkirk
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14 May 1940
The Netherlands surrenders to Germany.

26 May 1940
Allied forces retreat to Dunkirk and are evacuated to Britain.

17 May 1940
Germany enters Brussels and takes Antwerp.

21 May 1940
Germany holds large areas of northern France including Abbeville and Amiens.

10 May 1940
Germany begins its campaign to take control of western Europe.

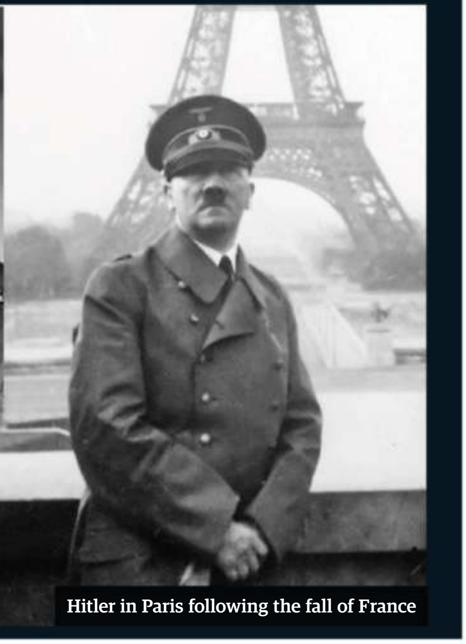
14 June 1940
Germany occupies Paris.

25 June 1940
France officially surrenders to Germany having signed the Franco-German Armistice three days prior.

11 May 1940
Luxembourg is occupied by Germany.

Who was Erich von Manstein?

Born in Berlin on 24 November 1887, and after seeing service during World War I, Manstein was the chief of staff to Germany's Army Group South at the start of World War II. He was one of the main instigators of an offensive through the Ardennes (known as Case Yellow or Fall Gelb) during the invasion of France in 1940, which ensured Germany a swift victory in Europe. He later attained the rank of general, but his constant criticism of Hitler's strategies coupled with his failure to turn the tide at the Battle of Stalingrad in 1942 saw him ousted from the German army in March 1944. He was captured and imprisoned by the British in August 1945, and died almost 30 years later on 9 June 1973.


Hitler in Paris following the fall of France

Aside from Hitler's over-reliance on details, as the war dragged on he began to rely more and more upon his instincts, and "there were times that served him well, but a lot of times that didn't," Dr Megargee continues. "By [1944] he was sort of living in a fantasy land, frankly; he thought he was going to burst through the Allied lines and separate the British from the Americans and the whole Allied Western coalition would fall apart and he could go back to fighting the Russians [in the east]. By then his instinct had become delusional." At this point in the war Hitler's generals were doing their best to convince him of employing different tactics, such as initiating smaller offensives instead of large ones, but Hitler was having none of it.

For all his shortcomings, though, Hitler did at times make some smart decisions, but embarking on a war at all was a poor one. "The whole war was badly conceived to begin with. The idea that Germany could take on the British Empire, the Soviet Union and then the US at the same time was at the very least problematic. I've had people ask me when do I consider the war to have been lost, and I semi-jokingly say, '1 September 1939'."

With the hand Hitler had been dealt - or rather the hand he had dealt himself - he managed to conduct himself, and the army, in a reasonable manner at the start of the conflict.

The Battle of the Atlantic

3 September 1939 - 8 May 1945

For all his inexperience in ground warfare, Hitler was even more of a novice when it came to the sea. He didn't have any considerable knowledge of navies, and thus for the most part he left naval operations in the hands of generals he trusted including Erich Raeder and Karl Dönitz, who both served as commander-in-chief of the Kriegsmarine during the war.

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest military campaign of World War II, running continuously from the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939 to 8 May 1945. The majority of the campaign was fought between the Kriegsmarine and the combined Allied navies of Britain and Canada, and later in 1941 the US. The Germans relied considerably on their U-boat submarines, with only a handful of warships available.

The campaign revolved largely around the Allied blockade of Germany and a subsequent counter-blockade by the Kriegsmarine. German U-boats attempted to attack convoy ships travelling across the Atlantic, but the strength of the Allied navies, combined with Hitler's decision to pull many U-boats away for other campaigns, would see the Allies gain control of the Atlantic and the Channel by 1944.

The expert's view

"Hitler was involved in some key decisions, especially to take U-boats away from the Atlantic and send them to Norway and the Mediterranean. One probably can't argue that those decisions weakened the Atlantic campaign fatally, but they certainly didn't help it."

Verdict: Failure

"Hitler's on-again, off-again decisions regarding resources for the construction of U-boats did hurt the [campaign] considerably."

The British Royal Navy battleship HMS Barham explodes as her 38cm (15in) magazine ignites

Officers on a destroyer, escorting a large convoy of ships, keep a lookout for enemy submarines in 1941

Key moments in World War II

1939

Outbreak of WWII
Hitler invades Poland and, two days later, Britain and France declare war on Germany, heralding the start of World War II.
1 September 1939

Atlantic warfare
For almost six years the longest military campaign of WWII sees the Allied and Axis powers fight for control of the Atlantic.
3 September 1939

Blitzkrieg strikes
Germany takes control of large portions of western Europe, including Belgium, culminating in the surrender of France.
25 June 1940

Luftwaffe air raids
The German Luftwaffe begins an air campaign against the UK, but the Royal Air Force (RAF) stands strong and is victorious almost four months later.
10 July 1940

The Battle of Britain

10 July – 31 October 1940

With France defeated with surprising swiftness, Hitler was unsure what to do next. The German High Command had been especially unconvinced that France would fall in such a short amount of time, and thus they set about deciding what Germany's next course of action should be.

Hitler was all too aware that Britain posed a significant threat and, with little chance of a diplomatic resolution, he would have to attack. The prospects of a potential invasion of Britain (known as Operation Sealion), however, were incredibly slim. The Royal Navy was far superior to the German Navy (Kriegsmarine), while the Royal Air Force posed a formidable threat in the skies. If an invasion were to happen, the German army wanted to get as many troops ashore as possible, while the Kriegsmarine was adamant that such an operation would be impossible.

With numerous options available, Hitler eventually opted to test out the defensive capabilities of Britain with an attack from the air. If the German Luftwaffe could manage to gain air superiority over the Royal Air Force, it could then keep the British Royal Navy at bay while Germany mounted an all-out ground invasion.

Britain, however, proved a much more stubborn opponent than Germany had ever anticipated, and ultimately the RAF was never in too much danger of succumbing to defeat. One of the key factors that affected the outcome was the decision for the Luftwaffe to switch from bombing British military targets and airfields to bombing cities such as London as a terror tactic.

With the Luftwaffe unable to gain air superiority, Hitler postponed Operation Sealion indefinitely in October 1940. However, the bombing of civilian Britain continued in what was to become known as the Blitz.

"The Battle of France is over. The Battle of Britain is about to begin"

Winston Churchill, 18 June 1940

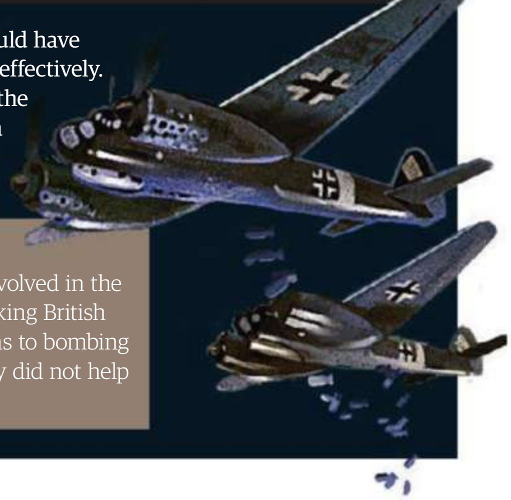
About 6,000 Heinkel He 111s were built, but for the most part they were outperformed by British Hurricanes and Spitfires

The expert's view

"The popular image is that the RAF was sort of on the ropes when the Germans made the switch [from bombing airfields to cities], and that in effect took the pressure off [Britain]. On the other hand, while the RAF was having a hard time all they really had to do was withdraw a little farther back into the country and husband their resources and they still could have stopped an invasion quite effectively. I don't get the impression the Luftwaffe ever really had a good chance of knocking out the RAF."

Verdict: Failure

"Hitler may have been involved in the decision to go from attacking British airfields and radar stations to bombing London, but this certainly did not help the campaign."



1945

USSR invasion
Germany invades the Soviet Union, reneging on the Non-Aggression Pact that the two countries had signed in 1939.
22 June 1941

Pearl Harbor attack
Japanese fighter planes attack the American base at Pearl Harbor, killing over 2,000 people. Four days later, the USA enters the war.
7 December 1941

D-Day landings
An Allied campaign of over 300,000 soldiers begins landings in Normandy in northern France in order to break Germany's stranglehold on Europe.
6 June 1944

Hitler dies
Hitler commits suicide in his Führerbunker as Germany faces defeat in the Battle of Berlin with the Soviet Union. Germany surrenders six days later.
1 May 1945

Nuclear attack
The US drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, killing tens of thousands in an instant. On 2 September Japan surrenders and WWII ends.
6 and 9 August 1945

The invasion of the USSR

22 June 1941 – 24 July 1944

The height of Hitler's involvement with his army came in 1941 when he decided to invade the USSR. Germany's battle with the Red Army began with the five-month-long Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941, and culminated in the Soviets liberating Minsk (Belarus) and Majdanek (Poland) in July 1944.

Hitler and his generals believed that the Soviet Union would fall if Germany mounted a sustained attack. They presumed, somewhat naively, that the Red Army would collapse and the Soviet people would surrender after a short military campaign, allowing Germany to occupy large portions of the USSR while focusing their efforts on Britain in the west. This, of course, was anything but what really happened, and Hitler's underestimation of the Soviet Union was a major failing of the entire campaign.

Hitler held a great number of debates in Barbarossa itself regarding the direction of the main attack: whether it should go to Moscow or into the Ukraine and up through Leningrad. Hitler ultimately made the choice to focus on the economic resources of the Soviet Union rather than the capital. Hitler had good instincts in this regard, but the overall decision to attack the Soviet Union was a poor one.

The Soviets refused to 'roll over' the way the Germans had expected them to, and while Hitler's direction of the campaign in the summer of 1941 was adequate, his refusal to heed the advice of his generals as the invasion dragged on was a major flaw on his part.

Germany's Blitzkrieg tactics that had been so successful earlier in the war were nullified by the Red Army's tactic of holding back before launching counteroffensives. In December 1941 Germany was at the gates of Moscow, but the Soviets kept attacking and wore the Germans down. With winter approaching, many of Hitler's generals suggested the German army should retreat and consolidate before attacking again in spring 1942. Hitler, though, was adamant the army should hold everywhere to ensure they didn't lose any of their heavy equipment, which he came under much criticism for. His decision was arguably the right one at first, but later in the war he became too enamoured with the technique.

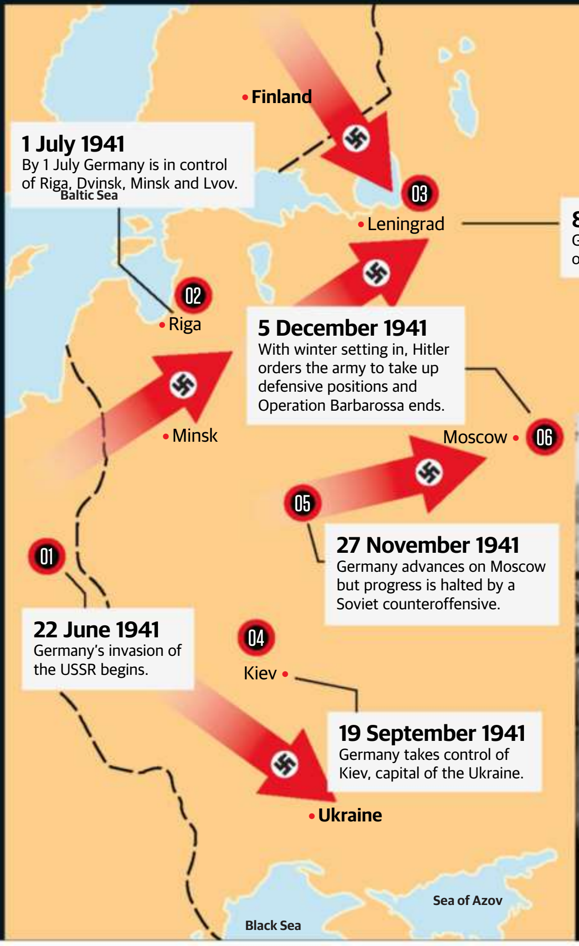
With their first attempt at defeating the Soviet Union unsuccessful, Germany would try again before the war was out. Hitler and his generals were convinced the Red Army was on the ropes, and sustained attacks would wear them out. But the Russians stood strong and, after successfully defending key cities including Moscow in 1942, Hitler was left with few options but retreat.

The expert's view

"The genocide of the Jews and the general abuse and destruction of the Soviet population really made it impossible to come to any kind of arrangement with the Soviet people. There's an argument to be made that if the Germans had gone in with a different attitude they could have [tempted] Ukraine and the Baltic states, and perhaps other portions of the Soviet Union, away. But Hitler assumed they were going to have a quick military victory and saw no reason to compromise. He convinced himself that the Red Army must be on the ropes, and they kept pushing in the winter, still trying to take Moscow and still trying to advance in the south, and they ran out of steam. As a result, Germany found itself in the middle of winter without the proper equipment, with no place to go, and vulnerable to the Soviet counteroffensive."

Verdict: Failure

"If you ignore the bad decision of attacking the USSR to begin with, on an operational level Hitler did fairly well [at first, but he lost his way]."



1 July 1941
By 1 July Germany is in control of Riga, Dvinsk, Minsk and Lvov.

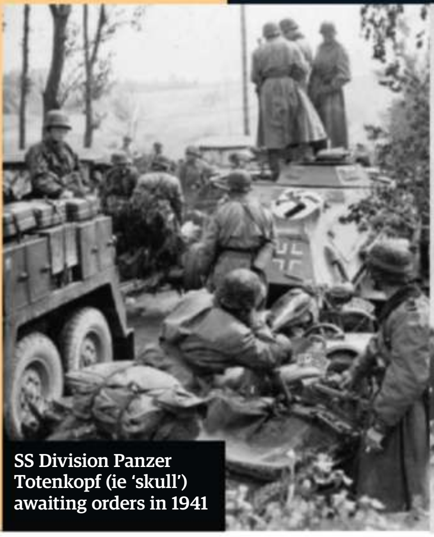
8 September 1941
Germany begins the Siege of Leningrad.

5 December 1941
With winter setting in, Hitler orders the army to take up defensive positions and Operation Barbarossa ends.

27 November 1941
Germany advances on Moscow but progress is halted by a Soviet counteroffensive.

22 June 1941
Germany's invasion of the USSR begins.

19 September 1941
Germany takes control of Kiev, capital of the Ukraine.



SS Division Panzer Totenkopf (ie 'skull') awaiting orders in 1941

German troops moving into Russian territory in armoured vehicles in June 1941

Hitler poses with his senior officers and generals in June 1940

A soldier defending the German line with an MG 34 machine gun

To start with Germany made good progress into Russia, but the tide began to turn as winter set in

> "By 1945 Hitler was all but dictating to his generals exactly what to do, and he had little trust left in any of them"

The invasion of Poland was arguably his only course of action once the wheels of war had been set in motion, and the manner in which Germany conquered not only Poland but other nations, such as France, was commendable; they had swiftly and effectively seized control of a large chunk of Europe, thanks to Hitler's belief that France could be beaten. What he didn't count on, however, was the steadfast refusal of Britain to enter into any sort of diplomatic negotiations.

"With Britain not giving up his options were becoming extremely limited. He was in an economic bind; he was not going to be able to continue this war over the long run against the British because, sooner or later, Germany was going to run out of strength for that – even with the tentative support of the Soviet Union.

"So he made the decision for strategic and economic and ideological reasons to attack the Soviet Union – something he was more or less intending to do all along anyway. That decision was based on the assumption – which his generals shared and backed – that the USSR would collapse – that there would be one short military campaign which would destroy the Red Army. Obviously that didn't work out very well."

Indeed, the war came to a point in 1941 where defeat for Germany seemed all but inevitable and Hitler's strategic choices became ever-more limited. By 1942, after a second attempt at defeating the Soviet Union had failed, Dr Megargee suggests that, for Hitler, it became "just a matter of holding out as best he could in the hope that the Allied coalition would break up. And it became more based on delusion than anything else."

By 1945 Hitler was all but dictating to his generals exactly what to do, and he had very little trust left in any of them. But by then, and possibly even much earlier, for all the strategic knowledge in the world, Hitler had no hope of leading the Third Reich to an eventual victory. "I think quite honestly his biggest strategic mistake was starting the war.

"Beyond that you get into details, and there are arguments to be made for each of the strategic decisions he made after that – declaring war on the Soviet Union and the United States, for example – but that's all within the context of a war in which Germany was, I won't say fated to lose, but certainly was not going to win easily."

Hitler's deterioration from sanity to irrationality, therefore, was not the deciding factor in the war, however there can be little doubt that his leadership style did little to help what was already a difficult cause for Germany.

Perhaps even with the greatest generals in the world the Third Reich would have been defeated; of that we cannot be certain. What we do know, however, was that Hitler was not the great military leader he himself thought he was. For his handful of victories there was a huge truckload of defeats, and his refusal to listen to reason ultimately accelerated Nazi Germany down the path to an unavoidable defeat.

© Bundesarchiv Bild, Joe Cummings, Corbis

Genghis Khan

The early-13th Century saw a nomad rise from the tribal chaos of the Mongolian steppes to build an empire four times larger than Alexander the Great's

In the Western imagination, Genghis Khan is the blood-soaked infidel at the head of the Mongol hordes, wild-eyed murderers on horseback who slaughtered millions in a crusade for world domination.

He is the indiscriminate punisher, laying waste to great civilisations. But history tells a different story. Yes, Genghis Khan and his army wrought a lot of bloodshed, but it was not indiscriminate. In fact, Genghis Khan may have been the medieval era's greatest military and political strategist, forging alliances and dispatching enemies with an eye to ultimate unification.

Khan's genetic legacy – imposed by rape of enemy women and many concubines – is present in 16 million male descendants, reportedly

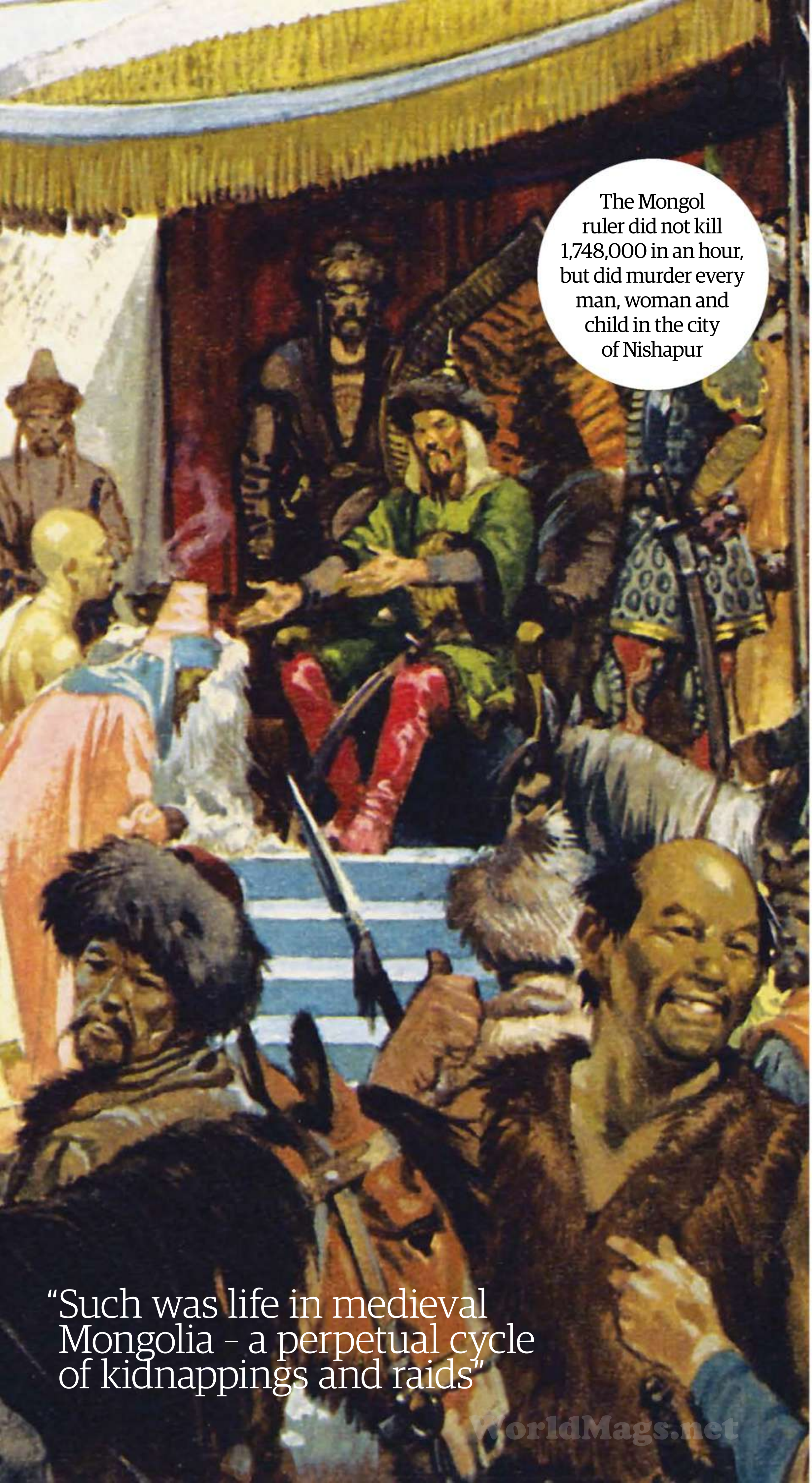
Genghis Khan's story begins in the mid-12th century at the edge of the Gobi Desert in eastern Mongolia. The Mongols followed a fiercely nomadic lifestyle centred around horses, in which families pledged loyalty to one of 30 or more tribes and slept in circular yurts called gers. Khan's father, a tribal chief, named his son Temüjin after a captured chief from a rival clan called the Tatars. Such was life in medieval Mongolia – a perpetual cycle of kidnappings and raids fuelled by blood feuds dating back centuries. Temüjin's grandfather, Khabul Khan, had briefly united the warring tribes during the 1100s, but that was ancient history.

Young Temüjin's life would be torn apart by tribal warfare. Aged nine, Temüjin was taken to a nearby tribe to live with the family of his betrothed. His father, Yesügei, was intercepted on the journey home by a band of Tatars, who tricked him into eating poisoned food, which killed him. When Temüjin received news of his father's death, he rushed home to assume tribal leadership and protect his family. But the tribe rejected his claim to power and abandoned his mother and his young brothers, leaving them to scavenge the desert wilderness for survival.

Temüjin's mother, Höelün, was herself kidnapped from the rival Merkits, and taught young Temüjin the importance of strength in numbers. As long as a tribe was unified, it couldn't be destroyed. Temüjin took that advice to heart, forging bonds with his father's former allies as a teenager. After he married at 16 to his betrothed Börte, he set out to present gifts to neighbouring tribal leaders in exchange for loyalty and mutual protection. While away, a legion of Merkit horsemen attacked his mother's camp, stealing away his bride.

At this point, Temüjin had a choice to make. He and his brothers could succumb to their thirst for revenge and pursue Börte's captors, or they could take a more strategic approach. Temüjin petitioned some of his allies for support, won their loyalty

Genghis Khan invented the passport, an iron medallion that allowed safe passage across his vast empire



The Mongol ruler did not kill 1,748,000 in an hour, but did murder every man, woman and child in the city of Nishapur

“Such was life in medieval Mongolia – a perpetual cycle of kidnappings and raids”

The Mongols captured the fortress-like Khara Khoto in 1226 and used its 3.7m (12ft)-thick walls to repel enemies until China's Ming Dynasty cut off water in 1372

Life in medieval Mongolia...

Tribal trouble

Temüjin, the boy who would become Genghis Khan, was born into a violent nomadic society, where warring tribes or confederations raided and plundered each other in a ruthless cycle of vengeance and betrayal. Genghis Khan's first great achievement was to unite these tribes under one Mongol banner.

Life on horseback

Mongol children learned to ride a horse as soon as they could walk. In nomadic Mongol culture, horses were more than transportation; they were hunting companions, war machines and, in desperate times, even food. Marco Polo reported that starving Mongol warriors would drink the blood of their horses for sustenance.

Strong women

Genghis Khan's mother Höelün and wife Börte are examples of strong Mongol women who were not only expected to raise the children, tend to livestock and prepare meals, but also collect arrows after battle and finish off wounded enemies. Genghis Khan's daughter became a fierce military leader too.

Moral code

As supreme leader of the Mongols, Genghis Khan was also its chief lawmaker. He wrote the *Great Yasa* as a guide to Mongol behaviour, which punished lying, stealing and adultery by death, and promoted humility and respect for all religions.

Anti-civilisation

Genghis Khan remained a nomad until the very end, refusing to establish a capital city for the Mongols. Mongol armies had no regard for the trappings of civilisation, sacking and burning priceless libraries and cultural treasures throughout the Islamic world.

Necessity of violence

Genghis Khan's war-like ways were driven just as much by economic necessity as they were by a lust for power and territory. As the Mongol population grew so food and resources became scarce and in 1211 his forces struck the Jin Dynasty in northern China to plunder their bountiful rice fields.

> "He spared his enemy's best horsemen and weapons experts, folding them into his growing army"

and assembled a small army of 500 men to raid the Merkit camp with devastating force. Not only did he liberate Börte but he utterly destroyed the Merkits.

Throughout his twenties and thirties, Temüjin would continue this pattern, strengthening his political alliances, sharpening his military tactics and expanding his reputation as a merciless butcher. He annihilated his father's murderers, the Tatars, allegedly ordering the death of all males over three foot tall. He boiled enemy chieftains alive and built pyramids from the skulls of vanquished foes. All the while, he spared his enemy's best horsemen and weapons experts, folding them into his growing army.

By 40 years old, Temüjin had achieved the unthinkable: the complete unification of the Mongol tribes. Having absorbed, subjugated or destroyed his political rivals, tens of thousands of his loyal followers gathered at a massive spiritual coronation called a khuritai, during which Temüjin the warrior was renamed Genghis Khan - literally 'king of the ocean', or 'universal ruler'.

Genghis Khan now commanded an army of 100,000 or more. These fighters weren't the barbaric raiders of lore, but a disciplined and highly trained war machine. Rank was based on merit and proven loyalty, not relations to the khan. Squads were composed of ten men, companies of 100 and divisions of 10,000. The Mongol horse - small and swift - was like a jet fighter. Mongol riders could fire their composite bows forward or backward while riding full speed, launching armour-piercing arrows as far as 320 metres (1,050 feet).

For centuries, the Mongol nomads paid steep taxes to travel along the Silk Road and conduct trade with the Chinese, who had amassed vast wealth in terms of food, technology and treasure. For his first great conquest, Genghis Khan set his sights on Xixia, a Chinese empire ruled by the Tanguts from Tibet. Outnumbered by the Xia defenders, the Mongol army employed a favourite tactic: false retreat. When the Xia warriors pursued the fleeing Mongols, Khan was waiting with a barrage of arrows.

Once Xixia pledged loyalty to the Mongols, Genghis Khan pushed east to the much larger Jin Dynasty, whose 600,000-strong army was busy fighting the Song Dynasty to the south at the time. The Mongol army moved easily toward the capital Zhongdu (now Beijing) - the Great Wall wasn't built yet - but lacked the weaponry to siege the fortified city. Always the strategist, Temüjin set his armies free to plunder smaller cities, acquiring Chinese experts on siege warfare.

> In order to communicate across thousands of miles, Genghis Khan designed a medieval 'Pony Express' network

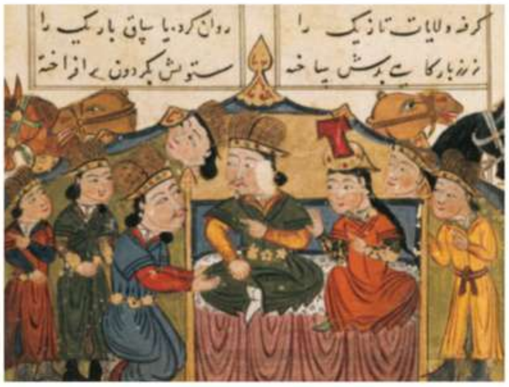
Genghis the god

The word 'khan' is an honorary title meaning 'sovereign ruler' in Altaic, a family of languages stretching across the Mongol Empire. In 1206, the young Temüjin was made the sole political and military leader of the newly unified nomadic tribes and given the title Genghis Khan, or 'universal ruler'. Like most Mongol warriors, Genghis Khan practised a form of shamanism called Tengriism and worshipped a god called Koko Mongke Tengri ('Eternal Blue Sky'). When he was named Genghis Khan, he was designated the earthly representative of Eternal Blue Sky. This holy mantle gave Genghis Khan the spiritual authority to rule over more 'civilised' nations. As Genghis Khan often proclaimed to his subjects, "One sun in heaven; one lord on Earth." As a ruler, though, he was unexpectedly tolerant to other religions, allowing Muslims, Christians and Buddhists to worship freely in his empire.

Defining moment

Marriage of Börte 1178

At 16, Temüjin and Börte get marries, however the nuptial bliss is cut short by tragedy. While Temüjin is away establishing alliances with neighbouring chieftains, his home encampment is raided by Merkit tribesmen who vow to steal every woman in revenge for the kidnapping of Temüjin's mother. Temüjin returns in time to rescue his mother and brothers, but cannot save Börte, who has already been carried back to the Merkit camp. Temüjin makes the conscious decision not to pursue the Merkits immediately, but to assemble an army of supporters. Only when he has 500 men under his command does Temüjin crush the Merkits, returning home with Börte and the spoils of war, eg animals, women and weapons.



Timeline

1162

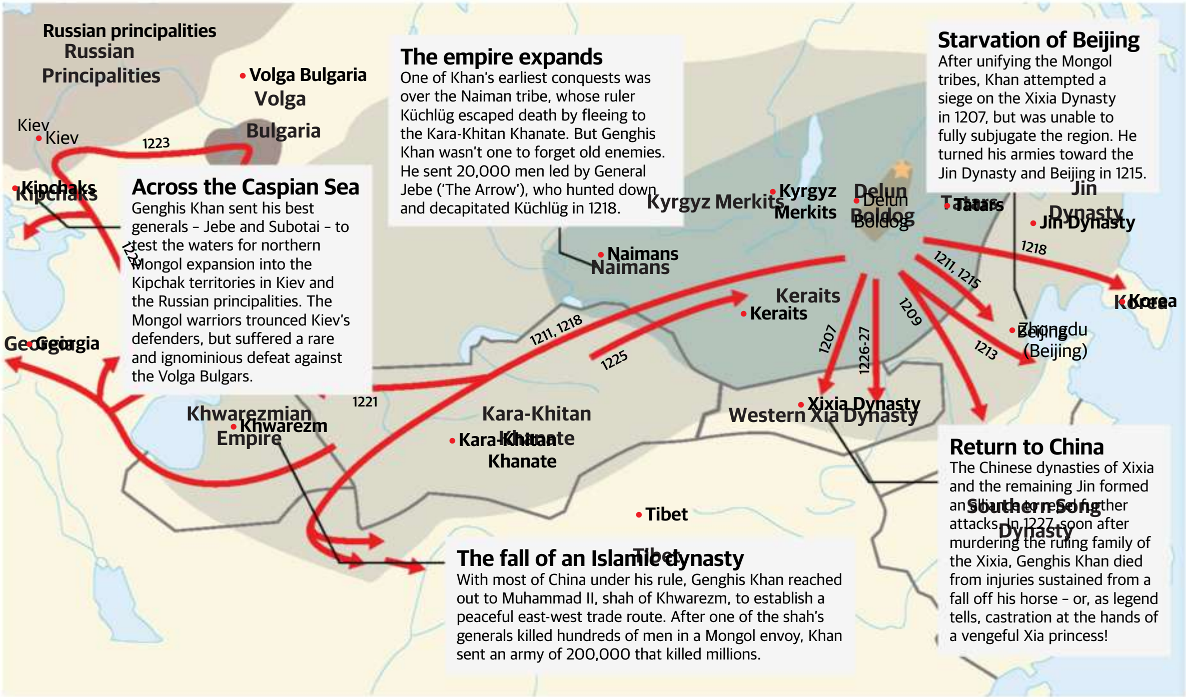
Birth of Temüjin
The nomadic Mongols kept no birth records and were unconcerned with tracking age, so it's impossible to know the exact birth date of Temüjin. We know he was born into a ruling family of the Borjigin tribe and was a direct descendant of Khabul Khan, who united the Mongols in the early-12th century. According to legend, Temüjin is born clasping a blood clot - a sign he'll be a powerful leader.
Circa 1162

Death of Temüjin's father
When Temüjin is only nine, he is promised in marriage to a girl named Börte from the neighbouring Olkhunut tribe. According to tradition, Temüjin is brought to live with the Olkhunut. While his father, Yesügei, rides home, he is tricked by Tatar clansmen into eating poisoned food that kills him.
1171

Murder in the family
Temüjin's mother Höelün is abandoned by the rest of the clan. Temüjin returns home to help Höelün care for his younger brothers and several half-brothers. However, when a half-brother attempts to steal one of Temüjin's fish, the future khan kills him with an arrow.
1175

Birth of an heir
When Börte is rescued from the Merkit tribe, she is pregnant, and there is some question whether the child is Temüjin's or the Merkit chieftain's. Temüjin accepts his son Jochi as his first-born male heir.
1181

A thirst for power
Young Temüjin is determined to break down the divisions between tribes. Those who would not join his Mongol alliance would have to be destroyed or assimilated. His first act is to exact revenge on the Tatars who had poisoned his father.
1187



Across the Caspian Sea

Genghis Khan sent his best generals – Jebe and Subotai – to test the waters for northern Mongol expansion into the Kipchak territories in Kiev and the Russian principalities. The Mongol warriors trounced Kiev's defenders, but suffered a rare and ignominious defeat against the Volga Bulgars.

The empire expands

One of Khan's earliest conquests was over the Naiman tribe, whose ruler Küchlüg escaped death by fleeing to the Kara-Khitan Khanate. But Genghis Khan wasn't one to forget old enemies. He sent 20,000 men led by General Jebe ('The Arrow'), who hunted down and decapitated Küchlüg in 1218.

Starvation of Beijing

After unifying the Mongol tribes, Khan attempted a siege on the Xixia Dynasty in 1207, but was unable to fully subjugate the region. He turned his armies toward the Jin Dynasty and Beijing in 1215.

Return to China

The Chinese dynasties of Xixia and the remaining Jin formed an alliance to resist further attacks. In 1227, soon after murdering the ruling family of the Xixia, Genghis Khan died from injuries sustained from a fall off his horse – or, as legend tells, castration at the hands of a vengeful Xia princess!

The fall of an Islamic dynasty

With most of China under his rule, Genghis Khan reached out to Muhammad II, shah of Khwarezm, to establish a peaceful east-west trade route. After one of the shah's generals killed hundreds of men in a Mongol envoy, Khan sent an army of 200,000 that killed millions.

> Despite centuries of exploration, Genghis Khan's hidden tomb, rumoured to contain priceless treasures, has never been found

When the Mongols returned to Zhongdu in 1214, they were armed with trebuchets capable of hurling 45-kilogram (100-pound) stones or 'bombs' of sulphurous petroleum called naphtha. Cut off from food imports, the residents of Zhongdu were starved into submission and Khan plundered its treasures and massacred its remaining holdouts.

After easily wresting control of the Kara-Khitan Khanate west of Mongolia, Genghis Khan dreamed of extending his reach along the full length of the Silk Road to the Caspian Sea. The only remaining obstacle was the Muslim kingdom of Khwarezm, ruled by Shah Muhammad II. The Mongols extended a rare hand of diplomacy, showering the shah with gifts in exchange for a free trade route through his territories. That all changed when a diplomatic convoy of unarmed Mongol merchants was killed by one of Muhammad's governors.

Genghis Khan's response to that treacherous act may be one of the most murderous in the history of warfare. The Mongol army pursued a three-year campaign of death and destruction that would claim millions of lives and erase centuries of Islamic literature, art and culture. In Urgench, the Mongols diverted a river to drown remaining survivors and stamp out all signs of the city. In Balkh, the hundreds of thousands of residents surrendered immediately, were divided into the useful and not useful, and then murdered anyway.

While Genghis Khan himself returned to the Mongolian heartland to oversee his immense bureaucracy, he sent his best generals on a scouting mission around the Caspian Sea, through the Ukraine and into Russia. The European armies had never encountered such an enemy, attacking with alarming speed and calculated brutality. Decades later, under the command of Khan's grandson, Batu, the Mongols would return to establish the Golden Horde, which would rule eastern Europe until the 1500s.

Genghis Khan would not live to see the fullest extent of his self-made empire. After falling from his horse in battle against a Chinese insurrection, he died from his injuries in 1227. His grandson Kublai Khan would ultimately bring all of China under Mongol control, creating the largest empire the world had ever seen. Genghis Khan may have left a legacy of merciless brutality, but he is also credited with opening up the first major trade and cultural exchange between the East and the West.

Defining moment

Annihilation of Khwarezm 1219

Driven by vengeance, Genghis Khan lays waste to this Muslim empire, telling the few survivors of the city of Bukhara: "I am the flail [a spiked medieval weapon] of God. If you had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you."

Defining moment

Burial of a khan 1227

Genghis Khan left instructions to bury him according to the traditions of his tribe, without any markings or signs. To this day, his exact burial location is unknown. Legend tells that the burial team trampled the site with horses, redirected a river to run over it and then killed all witnesses.

1227

Becoming a leader

Through strategic alliances and brute force, Temüjin is able to unite the warring nomad tribes into a single Mongol Empire. His loyal followers, culled from the top ranks of each rival clan, elect him as their 'supreme leader', otherwise known as Genghis Khan.

1206

Pillaging of China

Always the strategist, Genghis Khan turns his armies first on the Chinese dynasties of Xixia and Jin. The huge Mongol army is starved for resources and weaponry, which they find abundant in China. The Mongols put captured Chinese engineers to work building war machines.

1207

Pax Mongolica

With the defeat of Khwarezm and the Russian principalities, Genghis Khan's dynasty now spreads across two continents. This heralds a century-long period of trade, cultural exchange and relative peace.

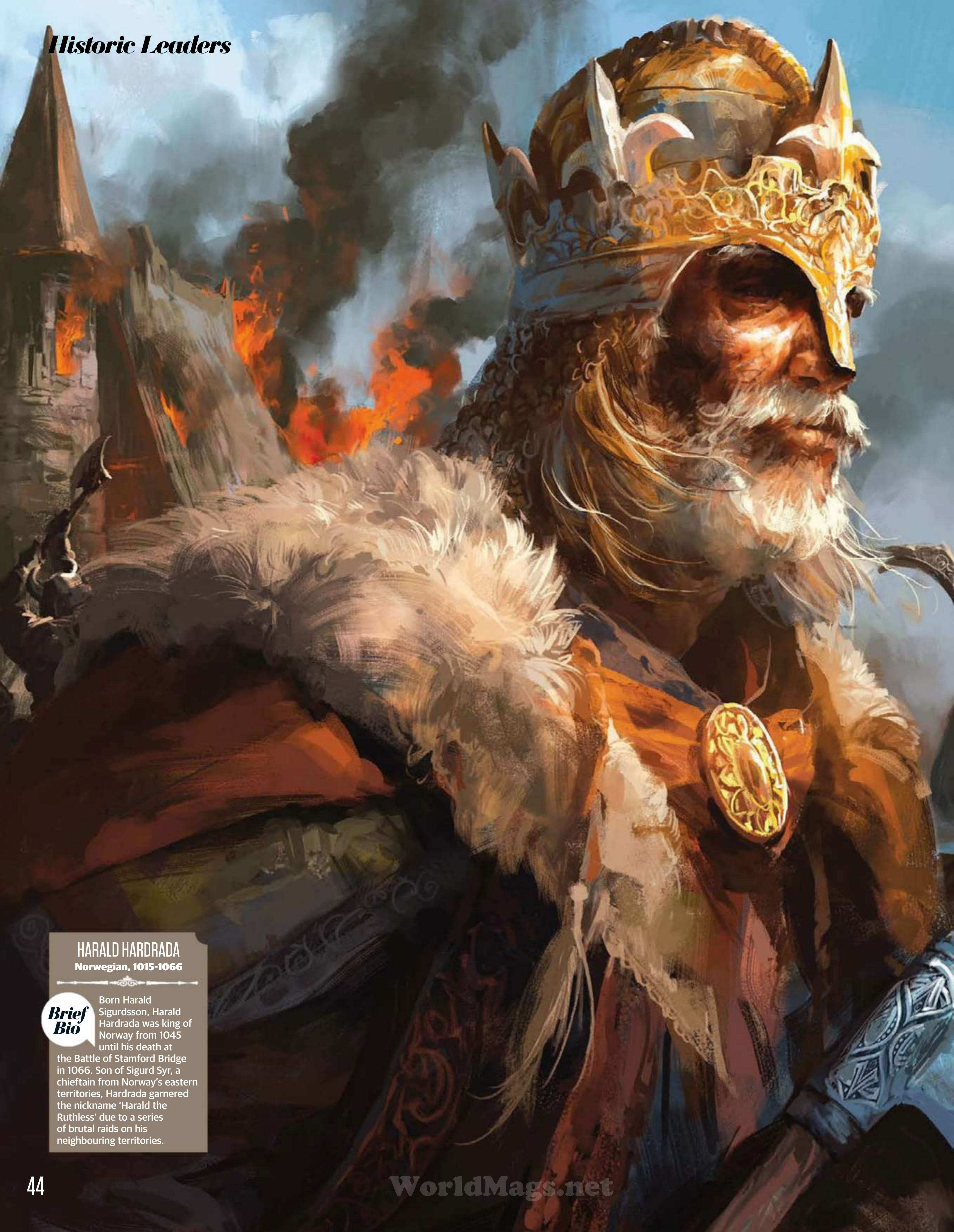
1225

Genghis Khan dies

One of Genghis Khan's final triumphs is the suppression of Chinese revolutionaries in the Xixia and Jin dynasties. While chasing down the enemy, he falls off his horse and dies from the injuries. However, some claim he is mortally wounded by a knife-wielding Xia princess when he tried to claim 'spoils'.

1227

© Alamy, Getty, Corbis, Look and Learn



HARALD HARDRADA

Norwegian, 1015-1066

Brief Bio Born Harald Sigurdsson, Harald Hardrada was king of Norway from 1045 until his death at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066. Son of Sigurd Syr, a chieftain from Norway's eastern territories, Hardrada garnered the nickname 'Harald the Ruthless' due to a series of brutal raids on his neighbouring territories.

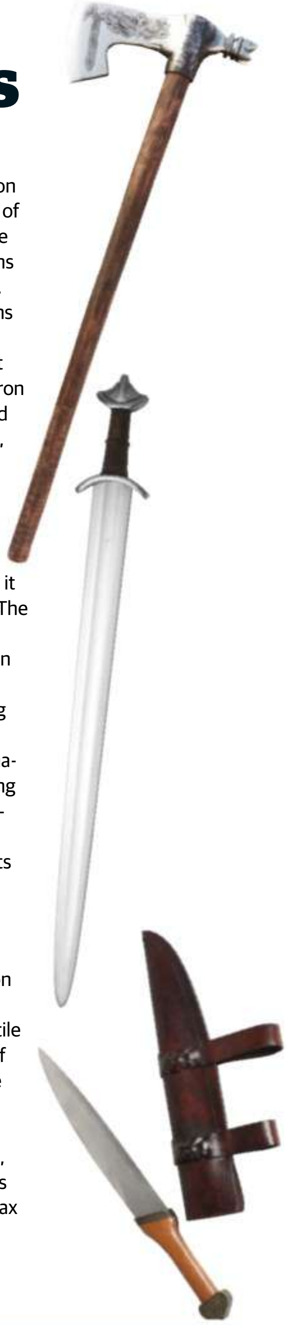
Harald Hardrada

With the Viking Age setting in the West, one man set out to reclaim the lands, power and culture of his forefathers. His name was Harald Hardrada, and this is his story

Conqueror, exile, mercenary and warlord; Harald Hardrada was many things during his bloody, brutal and eventful life. However, he was one thing above all others: a Viking. Descended, according to Scandinavian saga, from the legendary first ever king of Norway, Harald Fairhair, Hardrada – named due to his style for 'hard rule' – came from a long line of war-loving Viking rulers who each, much to the terror of large swathes of Europe, had ravaged, pillaged and ransacked with a frequency that was previously unimaginable. The culture, landscape and language of Europe had irrevocably been altered by the Age of the Vikings, and Hardrada, born into one of its noble institutions, was brought up to be totally wrapped in its ideals and indoctrinated into a mindset, the likes of which had seen the nations of Scandinavia dominate their known world for almost 300 years.

It was this in-built, centuries-old lust for war and conquest that saw Hardrada engage in his first ever battle in 1030, a mere 15 years after his birth in Ringerike, Norway. Hardrada's brother Olaf Haraldsson had been forced into exile in 1028 after the Danish King Cnut the Great had taken the

Viking weapons



Battle axe

The axe was the primary weapon of all the Scandinavian cultures of the Viking Age, with a multitude of designs used between nations with differing shafts and heads. One of the most popular designs was the Dane Axe, a large two-handed weapon with long shaft and crescent-shaped wrought iron head. Often the axe head would be granted a steel cutting edge, a factor that helped it generate skull-splitting force.

Sword

If a Viking carried a sword then it would be his primary weapon. The problem was that swords were more expensive to produce than axes, and so were only carried by the rich and powerful. Viking swords were 90 centimetres in length and took a Roman spatha-like design, with a tight grip, long fuller and no pronounced cross-guard. Hilts and handles were often inlaid with embellishments like jewels or inscriptions.

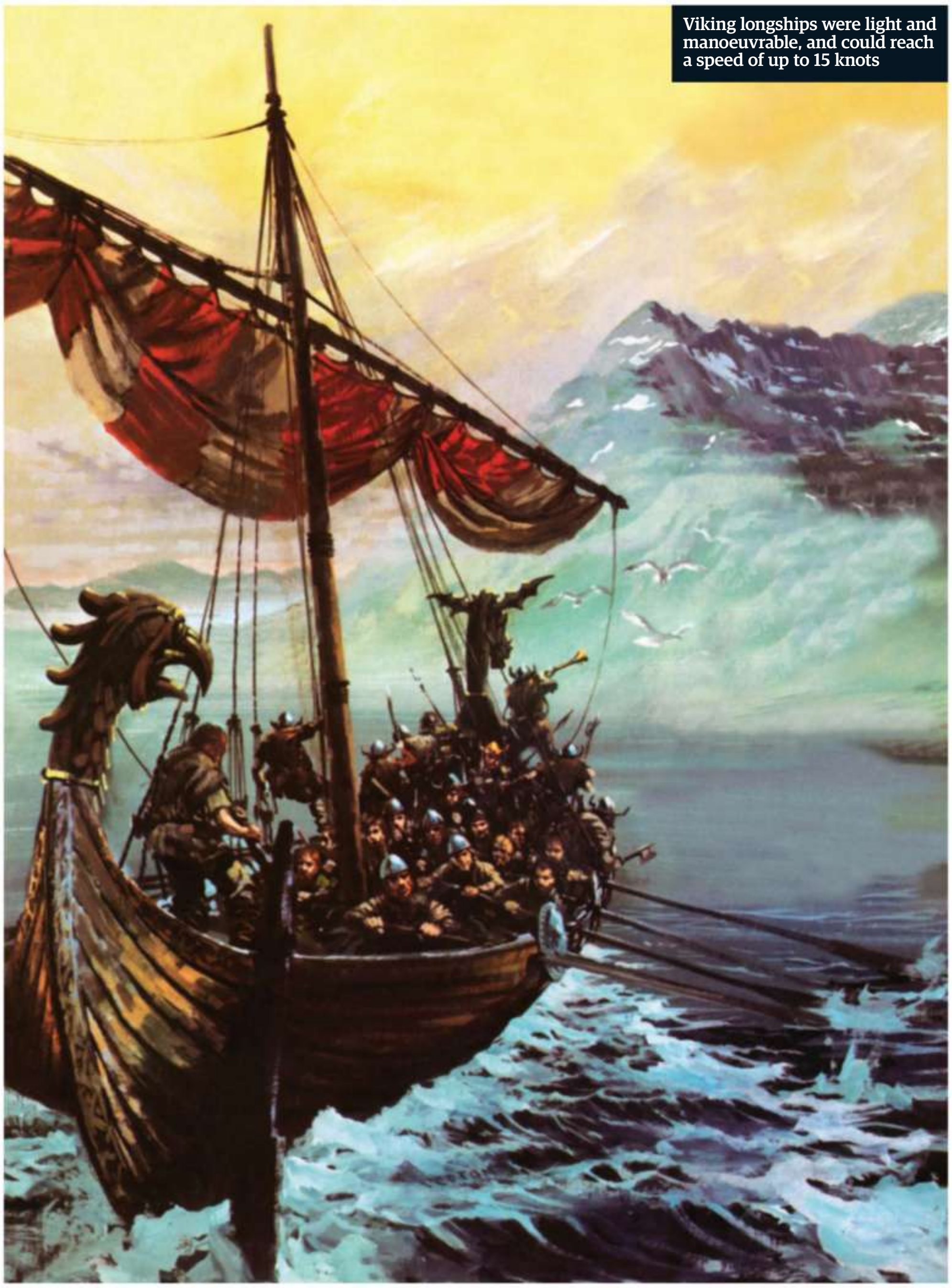
Dagger

The standard secondary weapon for each Viking warrior, the dagger was an incredibly versatile weapon, granting an element of speed to the Viking's otherwise slow armament. In particular, the seax was a popular model that consisted of a symmetrical, straight blade of various lengths with a smooth, wooden hilt. Seax daggers such as this could also be used for everyday tasks like skinning animals and carving.

Norwegian throne for himself. However, upon Olaf's return in 1030, Hardrada drummed up the support of 600 men from the Norwegian Uplands and joined with Olaf to take down Cnut. As such, on 29 July 1030, Hardrada took the fight to the Danish at the Battle of Stiklestad, fighting with his brother for control of his ancestors' country. Unfortunately, despite showing considerable military might on the battlefield, Hardrada was defeated by the far larger and stronger Danish army, with Olaf being killed in the fighting.

Hardrada barely escaped with his life, having been badly wounded in the melee. In fact, were it not for the covert help of his friend Rögnvald Brusason – the future Earl of Orkney – Hardrada would never have reached the remote farmstead in eastern Norway that he did a few weeks after the battle, nor been able to recover from his serious wounds. A month went by, and with each passing day the reality of what had occurred became all the more apparent to Hardrada. He had let down his brother, father, nation and revered forefathers. He had been defeated at the first hurdle, part-crippled by a foreign invader that remained in control of his country. Unable to bear the guilt any longer, one month after his defeat Hardrada exiled himself to Sweden, journeying north over the mountains under the cover of darkness.

Over the following year, little is known of Hardrada's movements or activities, with not even the sagas of old recalling what transpired. All that is known today is that almost a year



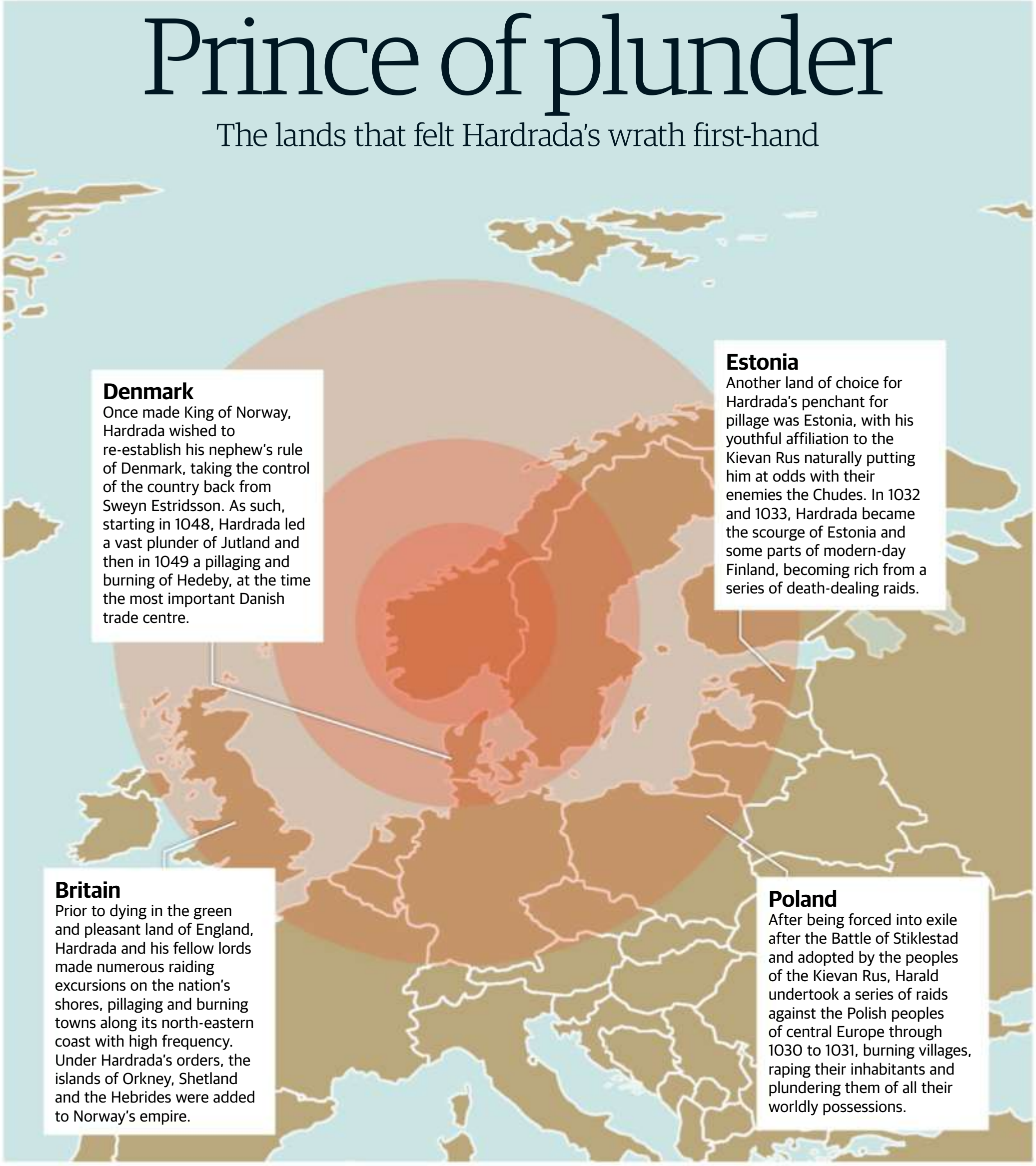
Viking longships were light and manoeuvrable, and could reach a speed of up to 15 knots

War of words

While it is true that Hardrada's reign was characterised by raiding, war and blood, he was also reportedly a sound diplomat and economist, and used his skills to bring a period of stability to Norway when much of Scandinavia was in turmoil. Two of the most notable examples of the king's ability to expand his empire by words rather than axe are, first, his arrangement of new international trade routes and deals – a decision that brought in much wealth to Norway, with deals struck with the Kievan Rus and the vast Byzantine Empire – and, second, his dissemination of Christianity throughout the lands of Norway. Indeed, Hardrada had been converted early to Christianity, and upon becoming king of Norway he implemented many policies geared towards promoting it – be that through direct communication or via the construction of churches and the reparation of existing ones.

Prince of plunder

The lands that felt Hardrada's wrath first-hand



Denmark
Once made King of Norway, Hardrada wished to re-establish his nephew's rule of Denmark, taking the control of the country back from Sweyn Estridsson. As such, starting in 1048, Hardrada led a vast plunder of Jutland and then in 1049 a pillaging and burning of Hedeby, at the time the most important Danish trade centre.

Estonia
Another land of choice for Hardrada's penchant for pillage was Estonia, with his youthful affiliation to the Kievan Rus naturally putting him at odds with their enemies the Chudes. In 1032 and 1033, Hardrada became the scourge of Estonia and some parts of modern-day Finland, becoming rich from a series of death-dealing raids.

Britain
Prior to dying in the green and pleasant land of England, Hardrada and his fellow lords made numerous raiding excursions on the nation's shores, pillaging and burning towns along its north-eastern coast with high frequency. Under Hardrada's orders, the islands of Orkney, Shetland and the Hebrides were added to Norway's empire.

Poland
After being forced into exile after the Battle of Stiklestad and adopted by the peoples of the Kievan Rus, Harald undertook a series of raids against the Polish peoples of central Europe through 1030 to 1031, burning villages, raping their inhabitants and plundering them of all their worldly possessions.

Three ruthless victories

Asia Minor campaign
1035

Following his joining of the Byzantine Varangian Guard, Hardrada was dispatched to Asia Minor to put down a widespread piratical Arab uprising. A series of running battles continued in which Harald pushed the Arab forces back into mainland Asia. Following this initial success, Hardrada led a search-and-destroy operation deep into the Asia Minor, slaughtering thousands and taking over 80 Arab strongholds.

Battle of Ostrovo
1041

While the leader of the Varangian Guard, Hardrada led the Byzantine forces against a Bulgarian army in Greece. In 1040 Peter Delyan, a native Bulgarian, led an uprising against Byzantine rule and declared himself king. Hardrada killed his foe, crushed his forces in battle and re-suppressed Bulgaria to such an extent that it remained under Byzantine rule for another 145 years.

Battle of Fulford
20 September 1066

Hardrada's last great victory, the Battle of Fulford, saw him land in England and defeat northern Earls Edwin and Morcar of York in a battle involving over 15,000 soldiers. Harald's tactical masterstroke was positioning his troops so that he could absorb the heavy English infantry charge before countering down his right flank and breaking the enemy's lines. This victory won him the city of York.

to the day after his defeat at Stiklestad, Hardrada arrived in the town of Staraya Ladoga in the Kievan Rus region of north-eastern Europe. The Kievan people were a wild bunch of Slavic tribes renowned for their hardiness, combat prowess and expertise in trade, with their geographical position placing them very much at the gates between the largely Byzantine-controlled East and the Scandinavian-occupied West. So when Hardrada emerged from the wilderness in 1031, his ancestry and prowess in combat saw him warmly welcomed by the Rus' ruler Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise, whose wife Ingegerd was a distant relative of his.

Badly in need of military commanders and recognising Harald's ability in combat, Yaroslav immediately made Hardrada leader of his forces and dispatched him to the western border to fight the Polish peoples at war with the Rus. The faith Yaroslav placed in Harald's breeding was well founded, with the warrior completing a crushing campaign against Poland, slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Poles and driving them back into their country's distant heartlands. Following this victory, Yaroslav left Hardrada to engage the Chude peoples of Estonia and the Pechenegs nomads that had been fighting on and off with the Rus for decades, with similarly bold but horrific results. Hardrada was reportedly demonic on the battlefield, driven by some seemingly unnatural force in the pursuit of his enemy's blood, transcending into a berserker state that no man could oppose.

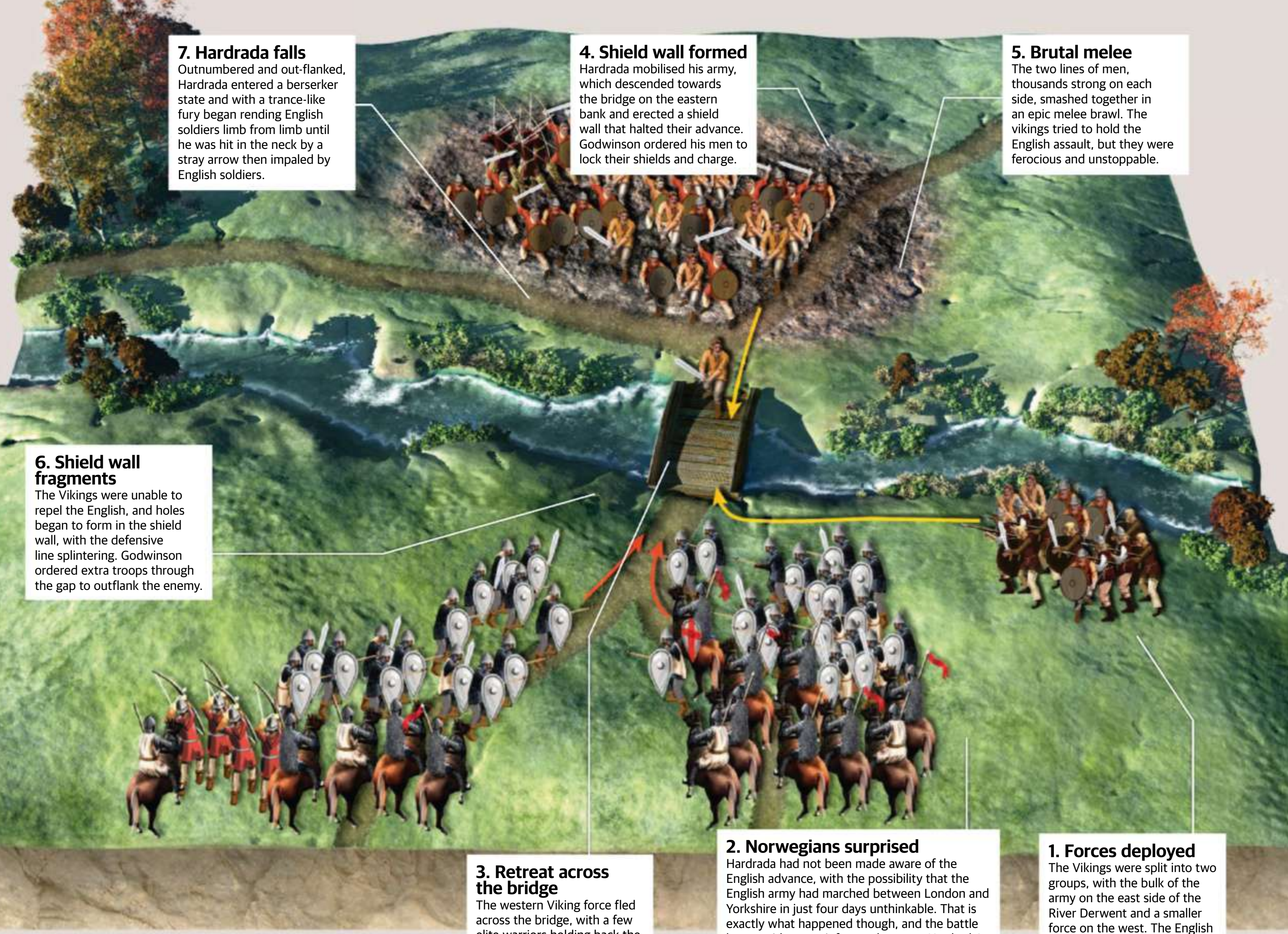
> "Hardrada was demonic on the battlefield, driven by some seemingly unnatural force in the pursuit of his enemy's blood"

These victories for the Rus saw Hardrada gain a fearsome reputation, with a band of 500 men pledging their loyalty to him. Hardrada and his band of mercenary warriors were now the most feared fighting force in Europe and, after securing the Kievan territories in 1033, they set off on a quest for fame and riches. They began heading south to Constantinople, the capital city of the fabulously wealthy Byzantine Empire. Arriving there in 1034 and immediately introducing himself to the Byzantine Emperor Michael IV, Hardrada and his men were immediately employed in the Emperor's Varangian Guard, an elite fighting force controlled directly by the ruler. In theory, the Varangian Guard were supposed to simply protect the Emperor, but due to Hardrada's desire for battle, he was, soon after, fighting on almost every front of the empire.

From Arab pirates in the Mediterranean to rebel forces amassed in Sicily and onto Arab strongholds throughout Asia Minor, Hardrada became the scourge of any Byzantine enemy. He was deployed like a rampaging bull on the battlefield, one that

Hardrada's last hurrah

Follow the events of the last Viking king's final battle at Stamford Bridge on 25 September 1066



1. Forces deployed
The Vikings were split into two groups, with the bulk of the army on the east side of the River Derwent and a smaller force on the west. The English force approached from the south west, so at first the English were west of Derwent.

2. Norwegians surprised
Hardrada had not been made aware of the English advance, with the possibility that the English army had marched between London and Yorkshire in just four days unthinkable. That is exactly what happened though, and the battle began with a vast infantry charge on Hardrada's force early in the morning. Hardrada was unprepared and completely overrun.

3. Retreat across the bridge
The western Viking force fled across the bridge, with a few elite warriors holding back the English at the choke point. However, the English beat the Vikings and crossed over.

4. Shield wall formed
Hardrada mobilised his army, which descended towards the bridge on the eastern bank and erected a shield wall that halted their advance. Godwinson ordered his men to lock their shields and charge.

5. Brutal melee
The two lines of men, thousands strong on each side, smashed together in an epic melee brawl. The vikings tried to hold the English assault, but they were ferocious and unstoppable.

6. Shield wall fragments
The Vikings were unable to repel the English, and holes began to form in the shield wall, with the defensive line splintering. Godwinson ordered extra troops through the gap to outflank the enemy.

7. Hardrada falls
Outnumbered and out-flanked, Hardrada entered a berserker state and with a trance-like fury began rending English soldiers limb from limb until he was hit in the neck by a stray arrow then impaled by English soldiers.

could seemingly not be killed in combat no matter how far the odds were stacked in his opponents' favour. Returning back to Constantinople in 1041, Hardrada was now famed not just for his battle prowess, but also for his immense wealth, with almost seven years worth of plunder being amassed into a vast fortune that rivalled that of many kings. Indeed, Hardrada had raided so much that he had to send large portions of his loot back to Yaroslav for safe keeping - no boat was capable of carrying the sheer weight of the bountiful precious metals and jewels.

While Hardrada's position under the Byzantine Emperor Michael IV was unassailable, with the Varangian Viking chief being highly praised for his deeds, upon the Emperor's death in December of 1041 he quickly fell out of favour, becoming caught up in the middle of a war of succession. Realising that his position was never going to be same again, Hardrada escaped a now turbulent Constantinople just months later, returning by boat through the Black Sea to the Kievan Rus. Upon returning to a rapturous welcome from Yaroslav, Hardrada promptly married the latter's daughter Ellisif and, for a short time, settled down in theKievan capital. There he engaged in little combat, and remained in the Rus for a further three years, living relatively peacefully.

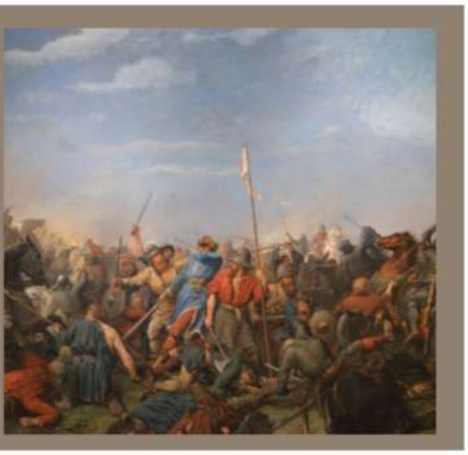
However, as the days and years dripped by, Hardrada was still tormented by his defeat at Sticklestad. He hadn't set foot in his native Norway for almost 15 years and, despite his vast riches and subsequent victories, was haunted by the legacy left to him by his ancestors. Norway, he decided, must be returned once more to Norwegian hands. Setting forth from Novgorod in early 1045, Hardrada journeyed back to the country of his birth, arriving in Sweden once more later on in the year. Here, Hardrada received excellent news: Norway was already back in Norwegian hands, with the illegitimate son of Olaf, Magnus the Good, sitting securely on the throne. Apparently, Cnut the Great's sons had abandoned Hardrada's much-loved Norway, and were currently fighting for the control of England.

Life after Harald

Despite a succession of other Norwegian and Scandinavian kings following Hardrada's death, none of them truly had Viking in the blood, and the Viking Age ended as abruptly as it begun 300 years previously. Far from the war-loving, plundering and raiding mentality that won the Vikings almost all of northern Europe, these successors had neither the will nor the military might to maintain the Viking Age and their way of life, with Scandinavian influence subsiding, and gradually becoming subsumed into wider European culture over the following decades.

For example, Hardrada's successor was Magnus Haraldsson, who was left King regent upon Harald's departure for England. However, after only reigning for three peaceful and uneventful years, he died of ringworm, leaving his brother Olaf III to take the crown, who proceeded to rule Norway until his death in 1093. However, while his rule was long, it was not Viking, with the king renouncing any offensive foreign policies and diverting funds to the defence of Norwegian borders. This pattern of defensive and peaceful ruler continued, with the only combat experienced being that of the civil wars of the 12th and 13th centuries.

The domination of Viking culture had come crashing down with Hardrada's defeat at Stamford Bridge, and Europe was now entering a more peaceful and civilised age. For Hardrada, in his last glorious stand, had being fighting on the razor's edge of a more savage time; one that saw the lands, language and laws of Europe changed forever. The last true Viking king was dead, and with him, the Viking Age.



> "Before he passed on to the afterlife to meet his hallowed ancestors, he needed to succumb again to the call of his blood"

Hardrada set off immediately to Norway and, after arriving in 1046 and negotiating with Magnus directly, struck a deal that he would joint-rule the country in exchange for half of his immense wealth. For the next two years, both Magnus and Harald ruled Norway, holding separate courts and rarely meeting. Hardrada now had everything he could want, owning much land, ruling his country and being fabulously wealthy too. However, after two years of supposedly living an ideal life, the Viking blood within Hardrada's veins called once more, leading him into a campaign of revenge against Denmark for the death of his brother and the pillaging of his ancestral lands. As such, in 1048 Hardrada plundered Jutland, pillaged and burned Hedeby – the most important Danish trade centre in the entire country – and launched a colossal naval assault on the Danish royal pretender Sweyn Estridsson. This battle was the infamous Battle of Nisa, and saw Hardrada lead 300 ships against Sweyn in a conflict that left many ships on both sides 'empty'.

Despite defeating Sweyn at Nisa and successfully launching multiple Viking raids on Denmark over the next six years, Hardrada never did take the Danish throne, and due to lack of finance was forced to begrudgingly declare peace with him in 1064. Now recognising that he would never reclaim the Danish throne as his own, Hardrada shifted his attentions towards another rich and historic land: England. England had been controlled by Cnut the Great's son Harthacnut until 1042, when he died childless. As such, Edward the Confessor had crowned himself king in his absence and proceeded to rule the island nation for over 20 years. When Hardrada heard in early 1066 that Edward had died on 5 January, he immediately decided to launch one more glorious Viking conquest. Now 50, Hardrada must have known that his time on Earth was coming to an end and, before he passed on to the afterlife to meet his hallowed ancestors, he needed to succumb once again to the call of his blood.

For the native English who witnessed the approach of 300 longships and 15,000 men on 8 September 1066 in north-east England, it must have felt like observing the coming of the apocalypse. The force was one of the greatest Viking armies ever to be assembled, and if unopposed would bring the nation to its knees. Stepping forth on English soil, Hardrada could taste the coming war, and after just 12 days he was not to be disappointed, with a 5,000-strong subsidiary English force crushed at the Battle of Fulford – see the 'Three ruthless victories' boxout for more information. Striding through the English dead, finally back in his element after years of inactivity and luxury, little did Hardrada know that this was to be his last victory. Just five days later, his army was surprised by the fierce force of the now English king Harold Godwinson, who marched over 180 miles in four days to meet with the Viking warlord at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. It was a battle that would end Hardrada – for a step-by-step account of the battle, please see the 'Hardrada's last hurrah' boxout – and, as history shows, have a profound effect on the course of England and Europe going forward.

Mere weeks after defeating Hardrada at Stamford Bridge, Godwinson himself would too be defeated by the Norman prince William, in large part due to troop exhaustion from the combat and enforced marching to and from York. As such, William became William the Conqueror, and instigated a centuries-long period of Norman rule over England, radically transforming its economy, language, architecture, law and education. Indeed, by the time the Norman presence in England had dissipated, the medieval age had long since transformed into the Renaissance, and its new, intoxicating culture, religion and science had swept away much of Europe's once-strong Viking presence.

When Harald Hardrada fell on the battlefield in England, it was more than just the flame of one great life being extinguished; it would prove to be the death of the last Viking warrior king.

Hardrada's lineage

Great great grandfather

Harald Fairhair
850 – 932 CE

Noted by many historians to be the first king of Norway, Fairhair became a legendary figure during the Viking Age, with his deeds relayed in numerous epic sagas. He supposedly won many battles against Norwegian opponents on his way to becoming the country's ruler, and famously had anywhere between 11 to 20 sons.

Great grandfather/ grandfather

Halfdan Sigurdsson of Hadafylke
935 – 995 CE

Little is known about Hardrada's grandfather, other than that he was supposedly Halfdan Sigurdsson, the alleged son of King Sigurd Hrise of Norway, Hardrada's great grandfather. Both Hrise's and Halfdan's lineage is unconfirmed, with only information as passed down from Icelandic sagas mentioning their link to Harald.

Father - Sigurd Syr

970 CE – 1018

According to Icelandic sagas, Syr was a prudent and modest man who was known for his hands-on approach to the management of his lands and properties. Records also indicate that he was a wealthy man, and that in 998 CE, chose to be baptised with his wife into the Christian faith.

Nephew - Magnus Olafsson

1024 – 1047

At times both king of Norway and king of Denmark, Hardrada's nephew Magnus garnered the nickname 'Magnus the Good'. He was crowned king of Norway at 11 and king of Denmark at 18, ruling both lands until his mysterious death aged 23. Upon his death the kingdoms were split, with Hardrada taking the Norwegian crown, and Sweyn Estridsson the Danish Crown.

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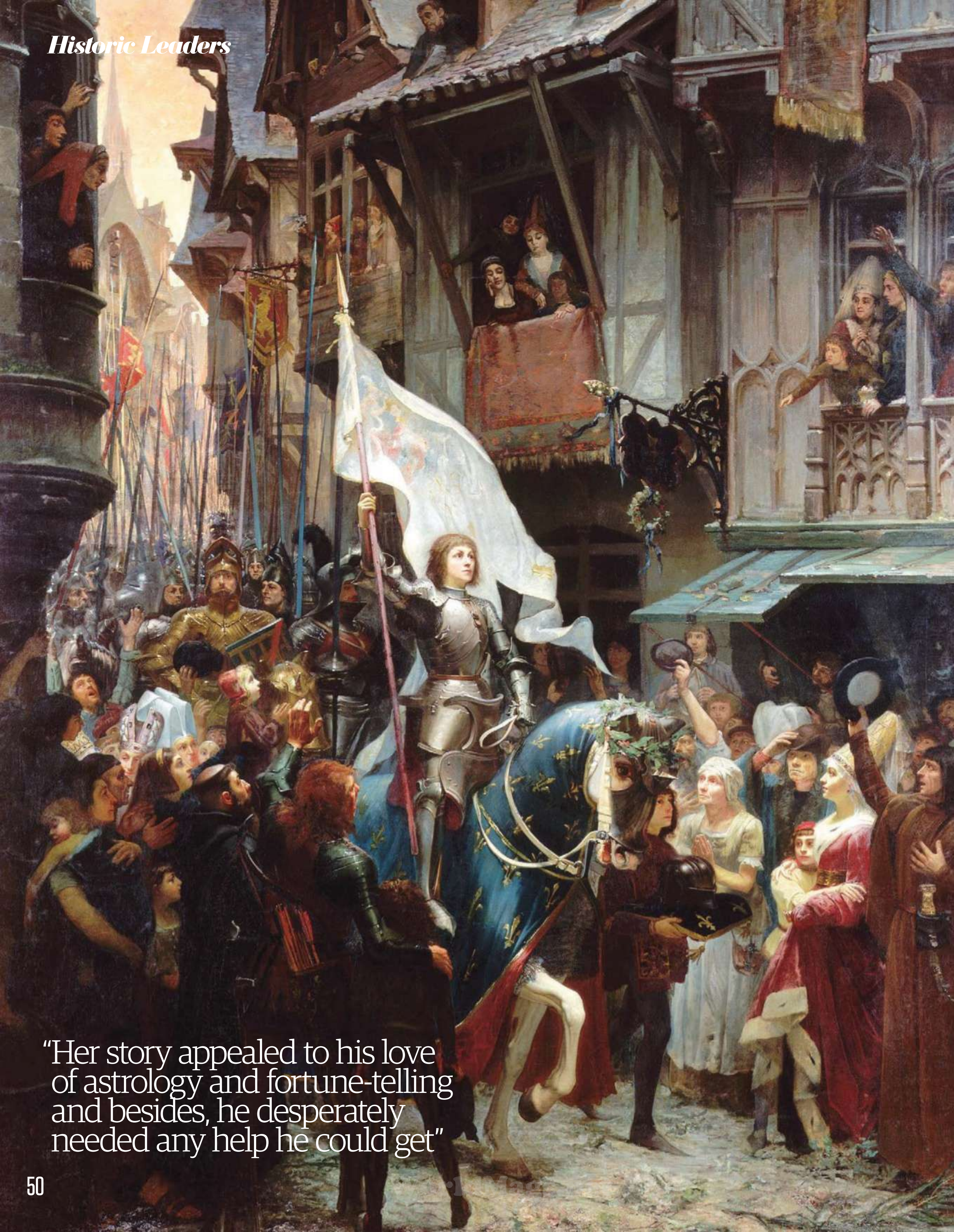


> "Her story appealed to his love of astrology and fortune-telling and besides, he desperately needed any help he could get"

Joan of Arc

The teenage martyr who led the French army and put the fear of God into the English

A young woman whose faith led her to challenge kings and inspire armies, Joan of Arc's devout belief that God had appointed her to lead the French to victory against the English drove her from the village of her birth and onto the battlefield. In her brief time she became a national figurehead, a symbol. It was an image she cultivated and encouraged and one that would ultimately lead to her death.

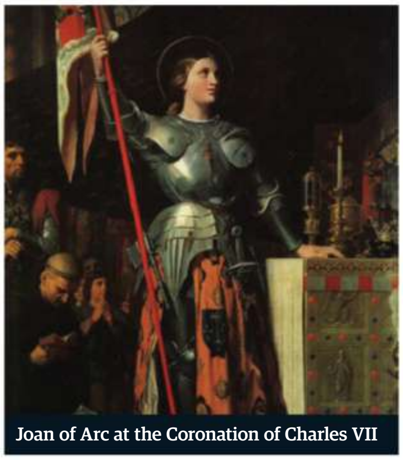
Flames secured Joan's martyrdom, just as they provoked her fierce patriotism. Jehanne D'Arc, or la Pucelle (the Maid) as she came to be known, was born in 1412 in the village of Domrémy, located across the river from Burgundy territory. The Burgundians, allies of the English, regularly attacked French territory. In July 1428, Joan's family fled a raid and returned to find the enemy had burned their town, fields and church. Joan had heard angelic voices since the age of 12 or 13, urging her to remain pious, but now they gave her a specific mission. The voices of Archangel Michael, St Catherine and St Margaret directed her to go into France and find her king, the Dauphin Charles.

> She claimed to have her first vision at the age of 12, when St Catherine, St Michael and St Margaret appeared to her in a field

The alliance between England and Burgundy had kept Charles from claiming the French crown. His enemies not only occupied Paris, but also held the city of Reims, where coronations took place. The crown would have to wait, however, as the French city of Orléans was currently in the grip of a protracted siege. Orléans needed help and Joan believed she was the one to deliver it. On 13 May 1428, the sixteen-year-old arrived in Vaucouleurs and begged Robert de Baudricourt, the captain of the garrison, to give her a military escort to Charles' court at Chinon. Baudricourt replied that she should be taken home and beaten. However, Joan would not be deterred and returned in January the next year.

She claimed she was the subject of a prophecy from 1398, about a maid who would "deliver the kingdom of France from the enemy." Baudricourt turned her down again, but her efforts were gaining traction. She gained favour with local nobility, particularly the Duke of Lorraine. Although Joan refused to attempt to cure his gout, the Duke agreed to give her a small escort and in February she travelled in men's clothes to Chinon, where she was presented to the court.

Charles was cautious but curious. Taking advice from a mad heretic could be devastating to his campaign, but her story appealed to his love of astrology and fortune-telling and besides, he desperately needed any help he could get. Joan immediately picked him out from the crowd and pledged her allegiance: "Most illustrious Lord Dauphin, I come and am sent from God to give assistance to you and the kingdom." He was impressed, but ordered she be tested before giving any official credence to her claims. One of the key figures in these trials was Yolande of Aragon, one of the true powers behind Charles and an intelligent strategist. After Joan's maidenhood was proved, she faced questions from clergy and theologians and passed with flying colours. Whether or not they truly believed in her voices was irrelevant. Charles now had a messenger of God, and Yolande raised a convoy for this messenger to lead.



Joan of Arc at the Coronation of Charles VII

Life in the time of Joan of Arc

The Black Death

From 1348 to 1350, the Black Death ravaged England, claiming the lives of some 1.5 million people. Carried by fleas, in turn carried by the rats infesting London, the bubonic plague spread through overpopulated towns and cities. England's economy and resources would feel its effects for decades to come.

Emissaries from God

Joan of Arc was not the first woman to claim the heavenly host had spoken to her. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) railed against corruption in the clergy, St Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) claimed to be able to hear and see Mass on the wall of her room when she was too ill to move, and Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) travelled Italy urging states to make peace with Rome.

From bows to cannons

As the Hundred Years' War raged on through the decades, the technology of warfare began to change. The English longbows at Agincourt in 1415 were the difference between victory and defeat, but as open battles were often replaced by lengthy sieges, cannon fire became a deciding factor. By the siege of Orléans both sides deployed cannons.

Heresy trials

The definition of heresy covers a great deal of sins, but the term boils down to denying any established Christian dogma. In the Middle Ages, heresy trials became more common and the Catholic Church aggressively pursued any enemies. This continued into the 16th century, with Copernican scholars accused of heresy.

The Bavarian Hussites

Czech religious reformer Jan Huss was burned at the stake in 1415 for heresy. After his death, the Hussite movement was born, separating itself from Rome. The Hussites declared that communion should be given with bread and wine, they believed in poverty of the priesthood, punishment of sinners and freedom of preaching. The Pope announced a crusade against them in 1420.

In April 1429, Joan rode out, holding her white standard and wearing a suit of armour commissioned by Charles. She announced that her sword would be found in the church of Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois, hidden behind the altar. It was an old gift to the church from the crusades, and the discovery was treated as a miracle. Her pious conduct became renowned; she forced her soldiers to stop taking the Lord's name in vain and expelled prostitutes from their camps. She dictated letters to the English, instructing them to leave France or face the wrath of God. A canny propagandist, the Dauphin ensured these letters were copied and widely distributed.

However, Joan was still an untested military leader. She arrived at Orléans eager for battle but had not understood that her forces were there as support, nothing more. Although frustrated, she managed to get her men into the city, past the English troops and was rewarded with the adulation of the citizens. They may have been pleased to see her but her impatience to attack was at odds with her fellow commanders' strategy. In her frustration she hurled insults at the English from the battlements.

When an attack was decided upon on 4 May 1428, Joan was not even told by the commanders and woke up as the fight was in progress. She arrived just in time to rally her troops and inspire them to capture their target: the small fortress of Saint-Loup. It was their first victory and Joan's confidence grew. She dictated a fearsome final letter to the English, ordering them to leave, and on 6 May another attack was mounted. Joan led the attack herself, routing the enemy. She advanced again the next day, claiming to be the first to storm the ramparts at Les Tourelles, where she took an arrow to the shoulder but stayed in the fight. The French commanders credited her for inspiring the troops to victory. Orléans hadn't just been relieved; the English had been routed.

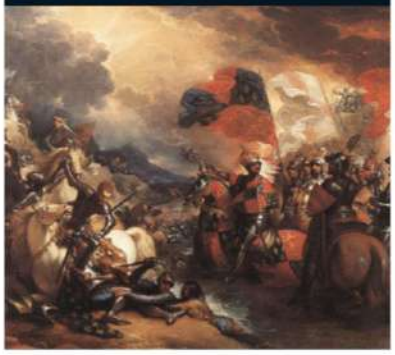
With Orléans free, Joan wanted Charles to proceed immediately to Reims but the Dauphin was more cautious. He wanted to clear the Loire valley and began raising money for the campaign. It would be a month before Joan would see combat again.

Technically, the young Duke of Alençon led the army but he was a firm believer in the young female warrior and frequently deferred to her. They swept quickly through the English resistance and laid siege to Beaugency. The English surrendered without realising a relief force was on its way, a force the French promptly set off after. They met at Patay on 18 June, where the ill-prepared English were decimated, with over 2,000

Joan sent many letters to English and Burgundian troops but she was illiterate and had to dictate them

"She dictated a fearsome final letter to the English, ordering them to leave, and on 6 May another attack was mounted. Joan led the attack herself, routing the enemy"

Edward III, one of the instigators of The Hundred Years' War, crosses the Somme



The Hundred Years' War, 1337-1453

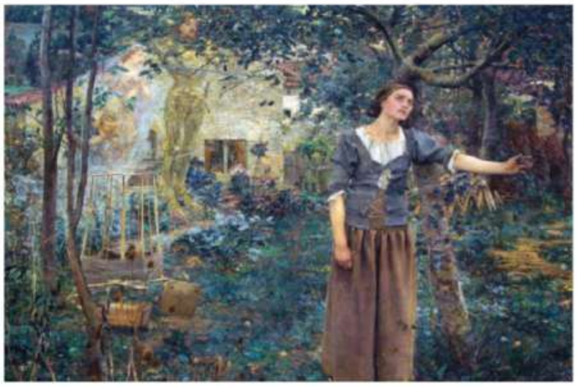
After William the Conqueror defeated Harold at Hastings in 1066 and claimed the English throne, English and Norman territories were combined. It was inevitably difficult to keep control of the taken land. By the reign of English King Edward III in 1327, only Gascony and Pontieu remained. When the French King Charles IV died heirless, Edward believed his mother and Charles' sister Isabella was the next in line, meaning the crown should be his. The French disagreed and chose Charles' cousin Philip. A furious Edward refused to pay homage and when the Philip confiscated his lands in Aquitaine in retaliation, Edward declared war.

The Edwardian era of the Hundred Years' War lasted until 1360. The English captured Philip's successor, King John II, but a compromise wasn't reached until the Treaty of Brétigny, in which Edward agreed to abandon his claim in exchange for Aquitaine and Calais. War resumed in 1369 when Charles V of France responded to Edward the Black Prince refusing his summons by declaring war. Charles successfully reclaimed many of the territories his predecessor lost, and the Black Prince's son Richard II would make peace with Charles VI in 1389. After the truce had been repeatedly extended, war resumed in 1415 when Henry V invaded, leading to decades of conflict during which the English would take Paris and claim kingship. They would not be driven out until the Battle of Castillon in 1453, the official end of the Hundred Years' War.

Defining moment

First vision 1424

At just 12 or 13 years old, she first claims to hear the voices of angels speaking to her. At first, the voices tell her to 'govern' her conduct. If she feels she had not behaved properly, the voices would admonish her. They also tell her to reject the marriage her family had arranged for her. Joan soon identifies the main voice as Michael, the archangel who led the battle against Satan in the Book of Revelation. As Joan grows older, Michael's messages continue to advise her toward piety, but gradually grow more political. Finally, Michael and the other voices, those of St Catherine and St Margaret, tell her to travel to France and begin her mission.



Timeline

1412

- **Birth of a warrior**
  Joan is born to a farming family in the town of Domrémy. She never receives formal education or learns to read and write, instead learning about religion from her mother Isabelle.
  1412

- **Domrémy burns**
  The territory across the river from Domrémy is Burgundian, and a raid into French territory proves a defining moment for Joan. Her family flees to Neufchateau and returns to find the enemy having burnt their town.
  1428

- **Journey to Vaucouleurs**
  In 1428 Joan's voices tell her to travel to France and talk to the dauphin Charles. She travels to Vaucouleurs to demand an escort, beginning a series of attempts ending in success after convincing nobles that she is the fulfilment of a prophecy.
  May 1428

- **Audience with the king**
  Joan is granted a meeting with the Dauphin Charles, who sees value in her for his military campaign to free Orléans. Joan immediately identifies him in a room full of people and impresses him with her fervour.
  6 March 1429

- **The sword is found**
  After convincing the clergy and theologians of her maidenhood and her gift, Joan is allowed to lead a force to Orléans. She announces that her sword can be found in the church of Saint Catherine-de-Fierbois.
  April 1429

dead and all but one senior officer captured. Joan played little part in it but by this point that mattered not, as her legend only grew stronger. By now, Charles was ready to head for Reims and the coronation. He led a grand procession, entered the city on 16 July and was crowned the next day. She was desperate for the king to attack Paris but he chose to leave Reims instead, only to be barred from crossing the Seine by English troops. Joan was ecstatic as she saw the only answer was an attack on Paris.

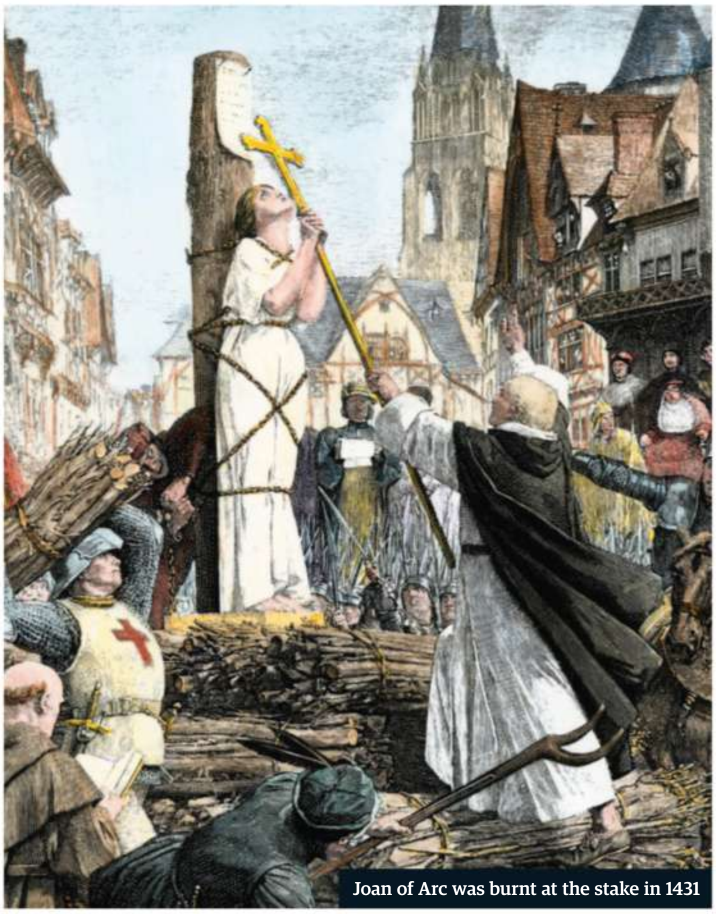
After skirmishes throughout August and a truce with Burgundy, on 8 September Joan finally led the Paris attack she had been itching for. She stood on the moat, demanding surrender, but the only reply she received was an English arrow through her leg. After hours of bombardment, her men reached her under the cover of darkness, but she was determined to continue the fight the next day. However, once Charles saw the number of French casualties he ordered her to return to his side.

> Joan dressed in men's clothes, claiming the spirits told her to. She also wore her hair short, but this is often not depicted in portraits

The attack had failed and Joan's usefulness was suddenly in doubt. She needed a victory to restore her reputation but in November 1429 failed to take the castle of La Charité after a long siege. When she returned to court, Charles gave her hereditary nobility but made sure she stayed with him, frustrating Joan. It was her duty to be on the battlefield expelling the enemy from her home soil, not rotting in court.

By 1430, the English were preparing a full-scale invasion of France to reclaim their recently lost territory. When the city of Compiègne refused to surrender, Joan rode to support them without Charles' authorisation. On 23 May she led an attack from the city, but the English reinforcements cut her off at the rear and she could not retreat. She was pulled from her horse and forced to surrender to the Burgundians. She testified that constant sexual harassment was the reason she remained in men's clothing, while the voices in her head told her not to escape. Defying them, she leapt from the tower but was injured and recaptured.

The English needed to make an example of Joan and the Parisian theologians wanted to try her for heresy, idolatry and witchcraft. She needed to answer for the way in which she had circumvented the church by claiming to receive her instructions from her 'voices' while her ability to inspire followers had to be stopped. If she were convicted by a foreign power the damage to Charles' reputation would be severe, so the French court paid the Duke of Burgundy £10,000 for her.



Joan of Arc was burnt at the stake in 1431

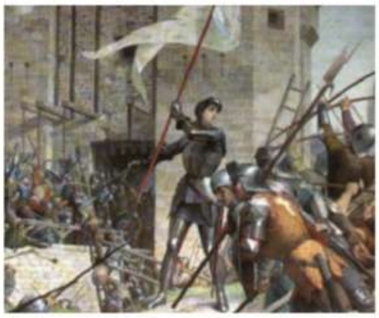
Six rounds of questioning took place between 21 February and 3 March 1431, with nine more between 10 and 17 March, conducted in her cell. Joan never changed her story. On 24 May, she was taken to the scaffold and told that if she did not abjure, she would be given to the secular authorities that would carry out her death sentence. Joan wavered as the sentence began to be read out. In front of the crowd, she recanted and was sentenced to life imprisonment and to wear women's clothes.

Two days later Joan changed her mind. Demanding she be allowed to attend mass, Joan was found in men's clothes, claiming the voices had told her that her abjuration was treason. Now the only possible outcome was execution. On 30 May she was allowed to make her confession and take communion before she was taken to the Old Market in Rouen and tied to the stake. She was given a small crucifix and a Dominican priest held a parish cross high so she could see it even as the flames began to lick around her. The young warrior who had led her country to such great victories over the English cried out, "Jesus!" repeatedly before leaving this world. The king she had helped crown, Charles VII, not once tried to help Joan. She was a tool that had stopped being useful. Still, the legend of Jehanne la Pucelle only grew stronger with time. In 1456 the sentence was annulled and in 1920, Joan of Arc was canonised by Pope Benedict XV. She is now a saint.

Defining moment

Siege of Orléans 29 April-8 May 1429

Joan arrives at Orléans amid great fanfare from the citizens of the city but is met with indifference by her fellow commanders. She is determined to mount an attack as soon as possible but is told they would wait for a relief effort. She is so poorly regarded by the other generals that when a sortie takes place, she's not told beforehand. Instead, she races out and joins the attack just in time to rally the flagging troops, ultimately claiming a fortress. This will be the first in a series of victories that would liberate Orléans and confirm her status for many as a heaven-sent hero.



Charles is crowned
After swiftly clearing the Loire region of English resistance, Charles finally travels to Reims where he is crowned King Charles VII of France. The coronation fulfils another part of Joan's voices' prophecy.
17 July 1429

A failed siege
Following Charles' coronation, Joan is convinced that Paris will fall. However, the siege fails as 1,500 men fall to the English bombardment, with Joan herself wounded, having to be pulled from the battlefield under nightfall.
8 September 1429

Capture
While leading an unsanctioned relief effort of Compiègne, Joan decides to attack the Burgundian troops surrounding the city. She is cut off by the English and pulled from her horse while trying to escape.
23 March 1430

Trial
Needing to regain superiority, the church interrogates Joan, telling her she can abjure or face a secular court that will execute her. She retracts her statement, only to change her mind days later, stating she'd rather die than deny what she knows to be true.
9 January-24 May 1431

Burned to death
Having recanted her abjuration, Joan is sentenced to be burned at the stake. A Dominican priest holds a cross up high enough for her to see from the flames. She calls out "Jesus!" several times as she burns to death.
30 May 1431

1456

Late justice
Charles orders that Joan's trial be investigated, a proceeding taking roughly six years to complete. Finally, in 1456, the original verdict is annulled, deciding the process had been unjust.
1456

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ANCIENT ICONS

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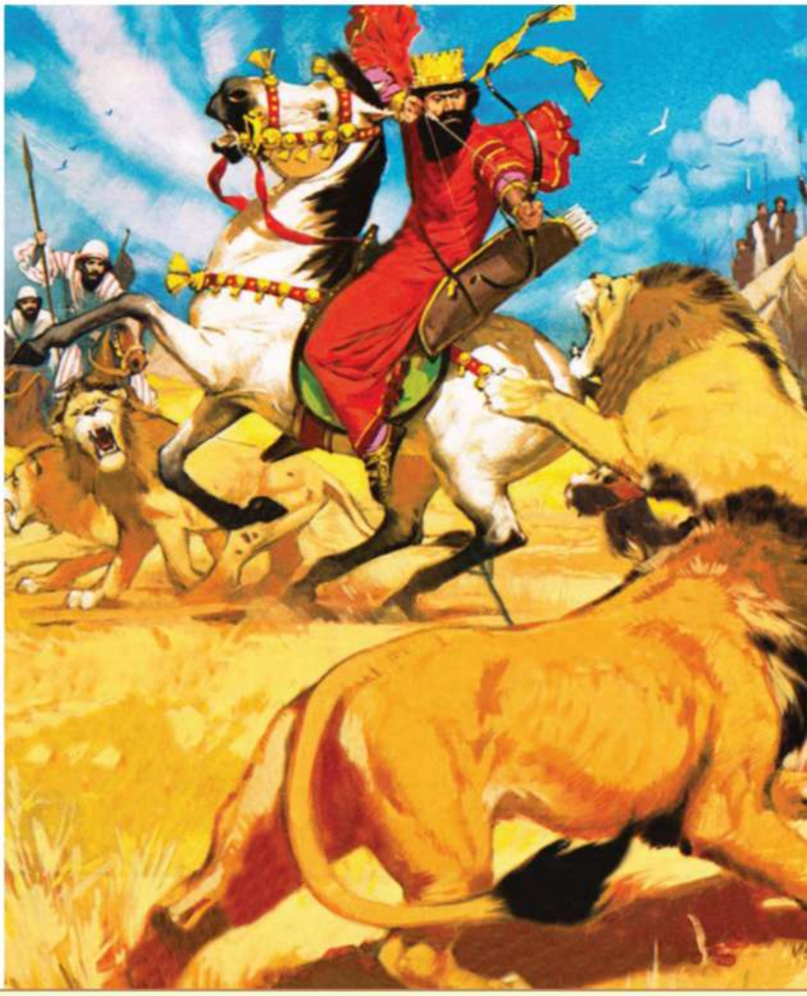
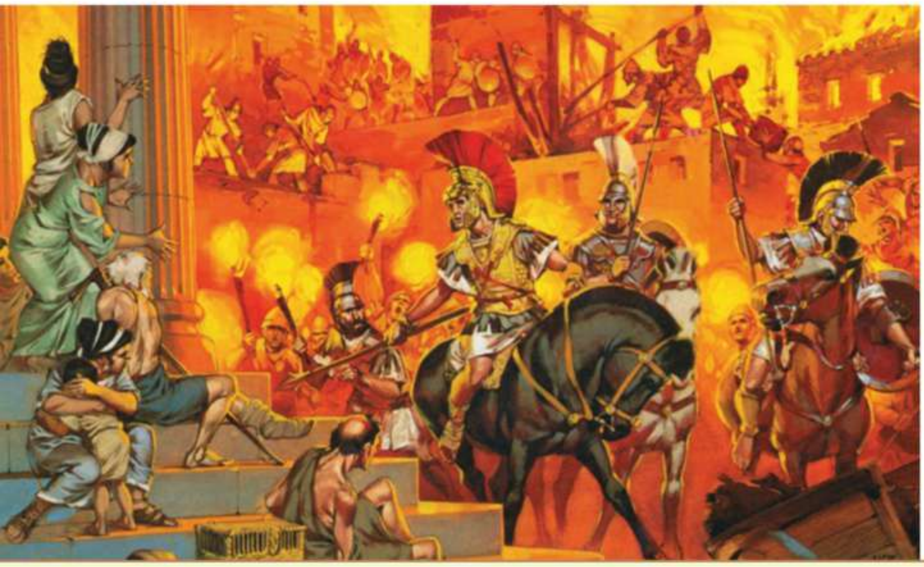




Caesar's Rise to Power

How one man's ambition and genius transformed Rome from a republic to a dictatorship

From Caesar's birth in 100 BCE to the time he crossed the Rubicon River in a brazen act of rebellion in 49 BCE, the Roman Senate floor was a battleground, where power was taken by cunning, conspiracy and force. The powder keg had exploded into conflict in 88 BCE with the first in a series of civil wars and rebellions, with the conservative elite locked in combat with the growing ranks of populists; Rome was full of orators, soldiers and politicians fighting for control. Gaius Julius Caesar was all three.

Caesar knew exactly what he was capable of and what he wanted and, when Caesar saw an opportunity, he wasted no time taking it. His cunning, ruthlessness and the sheer scope of his ambition would change the landscape of western Europe and beyond. After decades of outrage and protest, adoration and adulation, only his murder could finally put a stop to Caesar's vision but, even as his blood cooled on the Senate floor, there could be no doubt that the change he brought about was irrevocable.

From a young age, Caesar showed the qualities that would propel him through the corrupt, backbiting world of Roman politics. In 82 BCE, when Caesar was roughly 18 years old, his family was in a precarious position. They were linked to the regime of the popular consul Gaius Marius by marriage, so when Marius's bitter enemy, Sulla, took power by force they had to capitulate to this new regime to survive.

Sulla ordered Caesar to abandon his position as high priest of Jupiter and to break off his marriage to Cornelia, the daughter of Marius's old ally Cinna. Showing a stubbornness that bordered on suicidal, Caesar refused to kneel and instead went into hiding until his mother could convince Sulla to give him a reprieve.

Instead of idly waiting for Sulla's forgiveness, Caesar took the first step on what would prove to be a long and illustrious career. He joined the military and travelled to Asia in service of the empire. He quickly proved himself in battle, earning the Civic Crown (one of the highest military decorations available to a Roman soldier) for saving the life of one of his men.

This dedication to his fellow soldiers would be a cornerstone of Caesar's life in the army, as he understood how vital the respect and loyalty of his men would be. His spotless reputation was threatened when he was sent to obtain a fleet from the Bithynian monarch Nicomedes though. Caesar spent so long at Nicomedes' court that word spread the young soldier was engaged in an affair with the king. Whether or not there was any truth to the rumour, Caesar denied it fiercely at every opportunity. While the rumour never quite went away, it didn't slow him down.

When Sulla died in 78 BCE, the stage was set for Caesar's return to Rome. He had proven himself as a soldier and now it was time to demonstrate one of his other skills. He entered into the legal

GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR

100-44 BCE

Brief Bio

Julius Caesar was a Roman general, statesman, consul and notable author of Latin prose. His strength as a military leader and a politician played a critical role in the events that led to the expansion of Roman territory, the demise of the Roman Republic and, from its ashes, the rise of the Roman Empire.

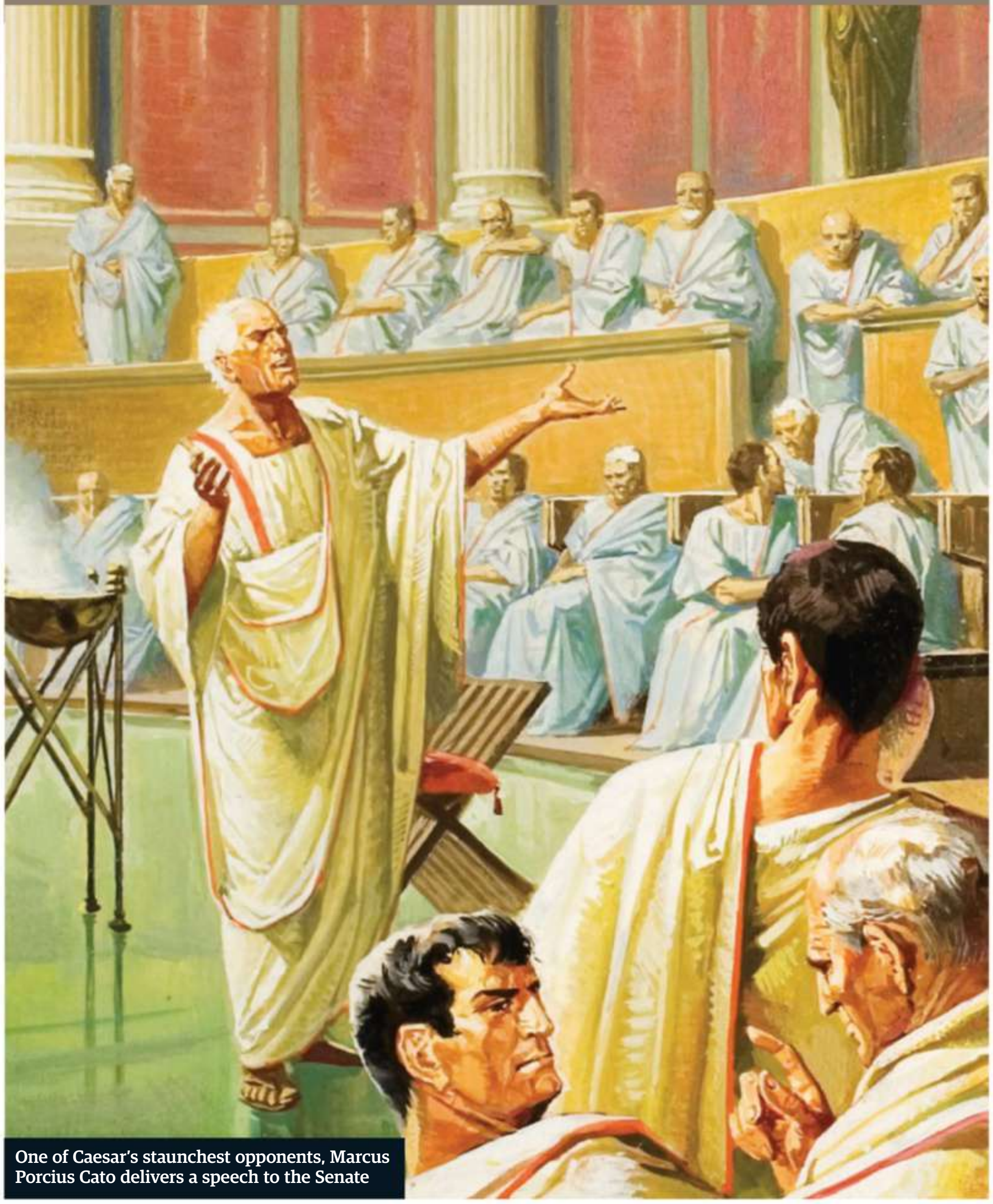
Rome before Caesar

Before Caesar stepped onto the Senate floor, the Roman political system was divided in two: the optimates and the populists. Every politician stated their belief in freedom, but the problem was that the two groups had different ideas about what exactly freedom meant. The Senate had become something close to a private club run by the optimates, where privilege, status and who you knew meant power. However, that libertarian ideal meant something very different to the populists, who made their voices heard in the People's Assembly. Both groups believed that they were acting in the best interests of the Republic, and both used the word 'liberty' in their manifestos, but they agreed on practically nothing, leading to political chaos.

The populists and conservatives would face each other in the Plebeian Assembly where they would fight for the popular vote. It would seem that the popular vote would surely have gone to the populists, but the conservatives had several points in their favour. The voters who could afford to travel from outside of Rome would often side with the elite, while others could easily be bribed. The outrage over this corruption, along with the government's military failures in Gaul and North Africa, led to a precarious state of affairs for anyone occupying the position of consul.

General Gaius Marius was elected to improve Rome's military operations overseas and was immensely popular. When Sulla, an optimate general, was elected for the same reason, the populists panicked and tried to recall him. An enraged Sulla responded by executing the tribune who had proposed the order and establishing himself as Rome's dictator, instigating Rome's first civil war. Marius and Sulla battled for power until the former died of natural causes, leaving Sulla without any opposition. He spent the remainder of his time in office working to diminish the influence of the populists and increase the power of the conservatives.

When Sulla himself died in 78 BCE, the people were desperate for a voice in the Senate, and Julius Caesar was ready to speak for them.



One of Caesar's staunchest opponents, Marcus Porcius Cato delivers a speech to the Senate

profession and used his other great talent: his voice. Caesar was a charismatic and persuasive public speaker and he used this skill to full effect. The Roman political system was in a constant state of imbalance between the wealthy elite that occupied the Senate and the populists who raged against such flagrant inequality. Caesar's gift for public speaking helped him to gain the support of the populace as he targeted corruption in the aristocracy. Caesar needed the people to love him and his every gesture was made with one eye on their reaction.

It wasn't just his grandstanding in the courthouse that was making him popular. The public loved a good story and Caesar had a knack for providing them. In 75 BCE he was captured by pirates while sailing to Greece, who planned on holding him to ransom to the tune of 20 talents of gold. Caesar had no intention of being ransomed for so paltry a sum and told them so. Instead, he convinced his captors to raise their price to 50.

The story that returned to Rome with Caesar was that the group kept up a lively, jovial atmosphere, in which the prisoner promised that, when he was released, he would hunt them down and kill them as punishment for their crimes. The pirates may not have taken him at his word and that would prove a fatal mistake. As soon as he was freed, Caesar led a group that captured, imprisoned and crucified them. Ruthless treatment indeed, but ever with an eye on the crowd Caesar showed a measure of mercy and ordered that their throats be slit first to spare them the agony of the execution. After all, they had treated him well.

An opportunity to face greater odds and test himself as a leader on the battlefield arose when fighting broke out in Asia Minor. Caesar raised a military force and defended Rome's territory long enough for his commanders to launch a counterattack. He returned home a hero and was promptly elected military tribune, followed by an appointment as quaestor (a kind of magistrate) for southern Spain and Portugal soon after.

This magisterial position put him in charge of finances in the region and gave him bureaucratic and administrative experience that would serve him well. When he returned to Rome for his Aunt Julia's funeral, Julius Caesar gave a eulogy that left nobody in any doubt about his ambition or his self-belief. In this speech, he reiterated that his late aunt's illustrious lineage could be traced back to the gods themselves. It would not have been lost on anyone present that Caesar was taking this opportunity to remind everyone that he was also from holy stock. A man descended from the gods would not be content with remaining a magistrate.

Now back in Rome, Caesar had taken his first steps on the political ladder and he quickly showed he wasn't going to stop climbing. Although he preached against corruption, Caesar was not above bribing anyone who might help him get what he wanted. As he leapfrogged from aedile in 65 BCE to high priest in 63 to praetor in 62, he was falling deeper into debt and making some formidable

> "As he leapfrogged from aedile in 65 BCE to high priest in 63 to praetor in 62, he was falling deeper into debt and making some formidable enemies"

enemies – particularly the apparently incorruptible senator Marcus Porcius Cato (or Cato the Younger).

A nearly fatal stumble occurred when Caesar was forced to slip out of two scandals in quick succession. Many believed that he had been involved in Catiline's attempt to assassinate the then-consul Cicero, while he was forced to divorce his wife when it became clear that she'd been in part responsible for the Bona Dea scandal. While the former plot involved the overthrow of the government, the latter, in which it was clear that a man had attended an exclusively female religious ceremony and thus desecrated it, was far more embarrassing. Both were costly, and Caesar ended up bankrupting himself to stay above them. If he had any intention of going further – which he certainly did – Caesar not only needed more money, he needed to get some muscle on side.

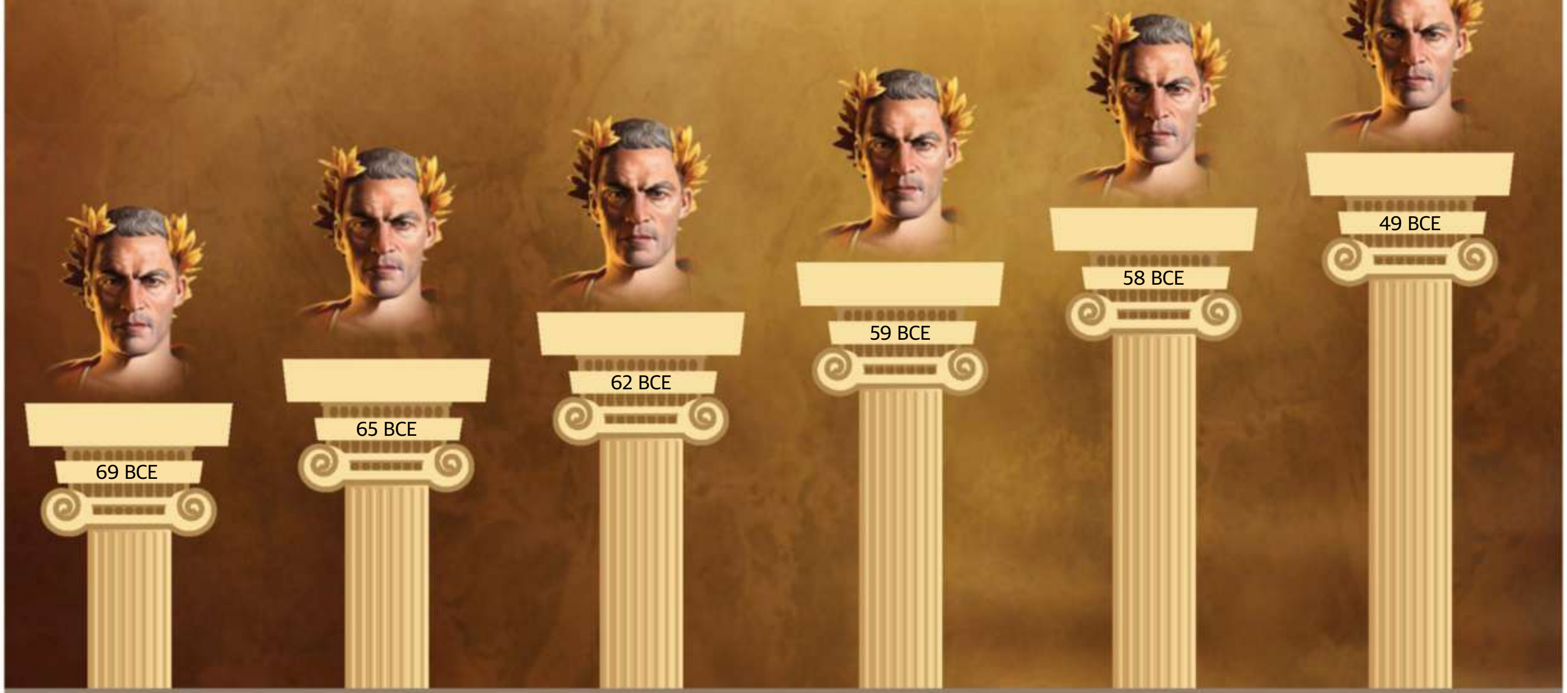
Financial backing came from the extremely wealthy Marcus Crassus. Crassus had made his name as a young general fighting with Sulla, but his real talent lay with making money from properties and buying and selling slaves. Caesar's debts were so serious that he couldn't even leave Rome to start his new governorship in Spain before he made some repayments. Fortunately for Caesar, Crassus saw how popular Caesar was with the public and agreed to satisfy some of his creditors, allowing Caesar to go on to yet more military triumphs in his Spanish Wars.

He crushed the rebelling tribes and looted their cities, before helping the region extricate itself from debt. Once again, Caesar returned home a hero and with his eye on the next step up: the consulship. He was so determined to obtain the position that he passed up the opportunity for a military parade through the city in order to put his application forward before the deadline. Adulation could wait; his rise to power could not.

He may have had money and he certainly had popularity, but Caesar knew that he needed brute force to combat his enemies in the Senate and keep them quiet. In a moment of brilliant inspiration, he turned to a respected general and Crassus's bitterest rival, Gnaeus Pompeius – otherwise known as Pompey. In 62 BCE Pompey had returned from campaigns in Syria and Judaea that were so

Caesar's path to the top

Assuming dictatorial control over a republic requires a rigid career plan



In 69 BCE Caesar was elected quaestor for Baetica (Andalucía). The position was similar to that of a magistrate combined with an accountant; Caesar oversaw the finances of the region and conducted investigations where necessary. This role may have inspired his vision of a smoother-running empire and his later innovations to Roman infrastructure.

An aedile organised games and looked after Rome's public buildings and markets. Caesar used this position to win public favour by staging immense gladiatorial games, with over 640 gladiators. The Senate was wary of the furore of the event and set a limit on how many gladiators one man could keep, but the message was clear: Caesar knew what the common people wanted.

The praetor position combined the duties of an aedile and a quaestor. They were senior magistrates appointed to oversee civil matters, while others had specific courts to head up. In the absence of a consul, the praetor took power. Just one step before consulship, at this point Caesar's opponents were beginning to grow anxious as he showed no signs of slowing down.

The consulship was a presidential post shared by two men that had been established after the Romans abolished the monarchy. It came with a lot of power too as the consul had control of the Republic's finances, the military and the justice system. Although a consul was supposed to listen to the Senate's advice, they could not be tried until their term of office was over.

A governor, or proconsul, was a regional position that had many of the same duties as a consul. Lucrative and powerful, it was the traditional posting following a consulship, and a proconsul could not face prosecution until his term had finished. As governor of Gaul, Caesar added modern-day France and Belgium to the empire and ventured on expeditions to Britain.

The position of emperor came about as Caesar attempted to find a title that matched his responsibilities without being named king. He took on the duties of several different offices, such as praetor and consul, without taking the titles themselves. He was no longer obliged to take the Senate's advice and he involved himself deeply in all aspects of Rome's infrastructure.

> "What came next was a political campaign so dirty and underhanded that even Cato, renowned for his honesty, was forced to resort to bribery to keep Caesar out"

successful it made the Roman senators nervous. In order to limit his power, they ignored his request to ratify the treaties he had secured and the promises he had made to his soldiers. The general was eager to lend his support to somebody who might get things done and restore his pride.

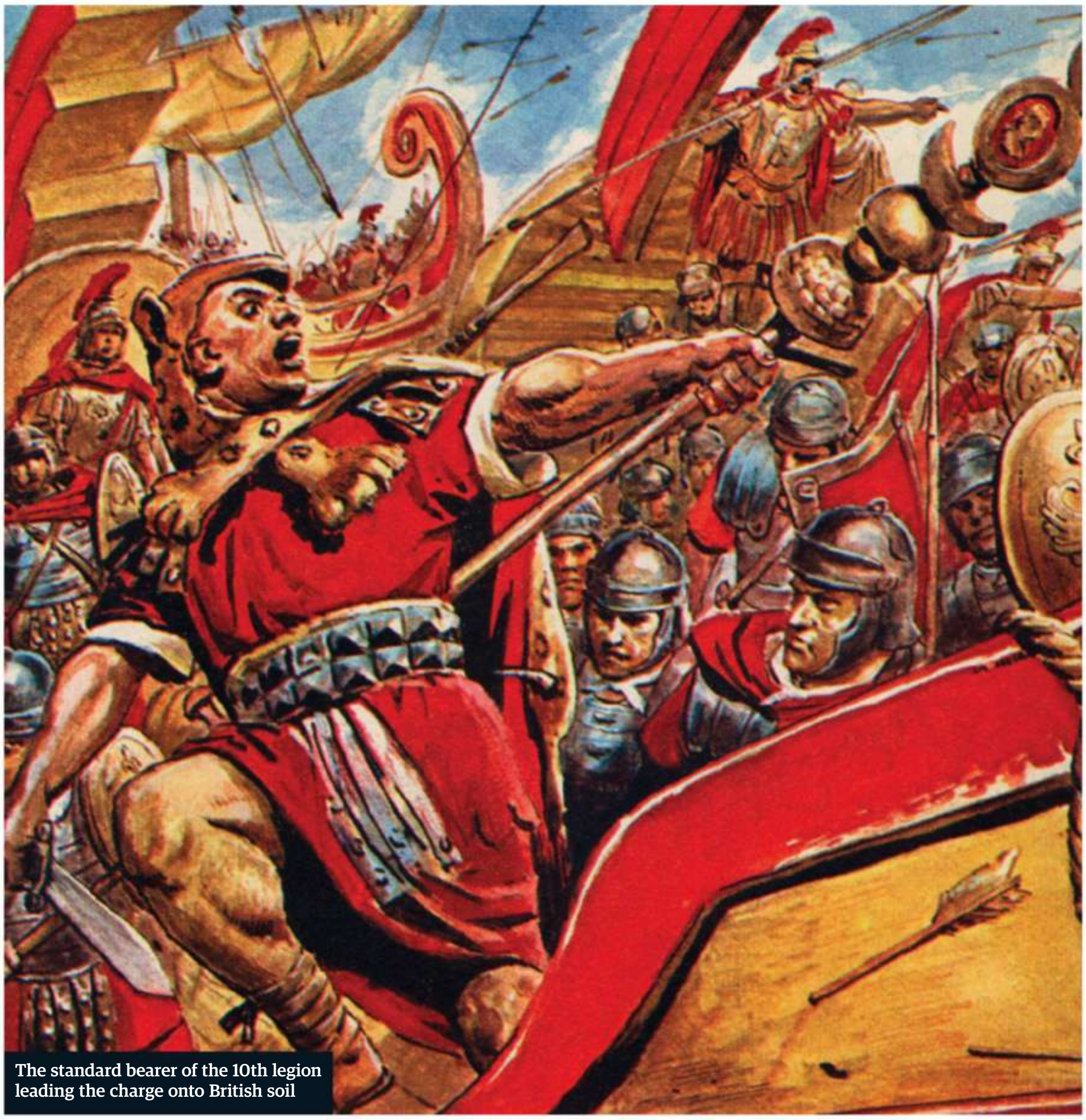
Caesar convinced Crassus and Pompey that the benefits of power were worth putting aside their differences and formed the First Triumvirate in 60 BCE. To seal their agreement, Pompey married Caesar's daughter Julia, while Caesar married Calpurnia – the daughter of a friend of Crassus. This political powerhouse terrified the Senate – particularly Cato – who set himself directly in opposition to the ambitious candidate.

What came next was a political campaign so dirty and underhanded that even Cato, renowned for his honesty, was forced to resort to bribery to keep Caesar out. It didn't work. With money, muscle and cunning, his campaign was unstoppable and Caesar was elected consul in 59 BCE.

While he took care of his friends (Pompey was appointed governor in Spain and Crassus a general), Caesar's time as consul cemented his reputation for ruthlessness. If his powers of persuasion weren't enough, Pompey's soldiers intimidated any opposition in the Senate. Caesar's co-consul (and Cato's son-in-law), Bibulus, could mutter about omens all he liked; he was intimidated and ignored to such an extent that the co-consul finally fled for the safety of his own home. It's rumoured that Pompey's soldiers even went as far as tipping a bucket of faeces over his head.

And Caesar didn't limit his rough treatment to his colleague. He imprisoned Cato for disagreeing with him and used Pompey's soldiers to clear the Forum of opposition. His methods were so outrageous it was certain that he would be tried for his crimes once he gave up office. Caesar was well aware of this and secured the position of proconsul in Gaul for a five-year tenure, despite Cato's objections, allowing him to leave Rome before he could be prosecuted. It was time for Caesar to face conflict on a much larger scale.

Cato was afraid that Caesar was going to use his position in Gaul to instigate conflict, and his concerns proved to be justified. Caesar immediately set about provoking Swiss tribe the Helvetii into an attack, which was the equivalent of a starter's pistol for years of relentless and wide-ranging campaigning. His attacks were ruthless and daring, and his responses to those of his enemies were quick-witted and precise.



The standard bearer of the 10th legion leading the charge onto British soil

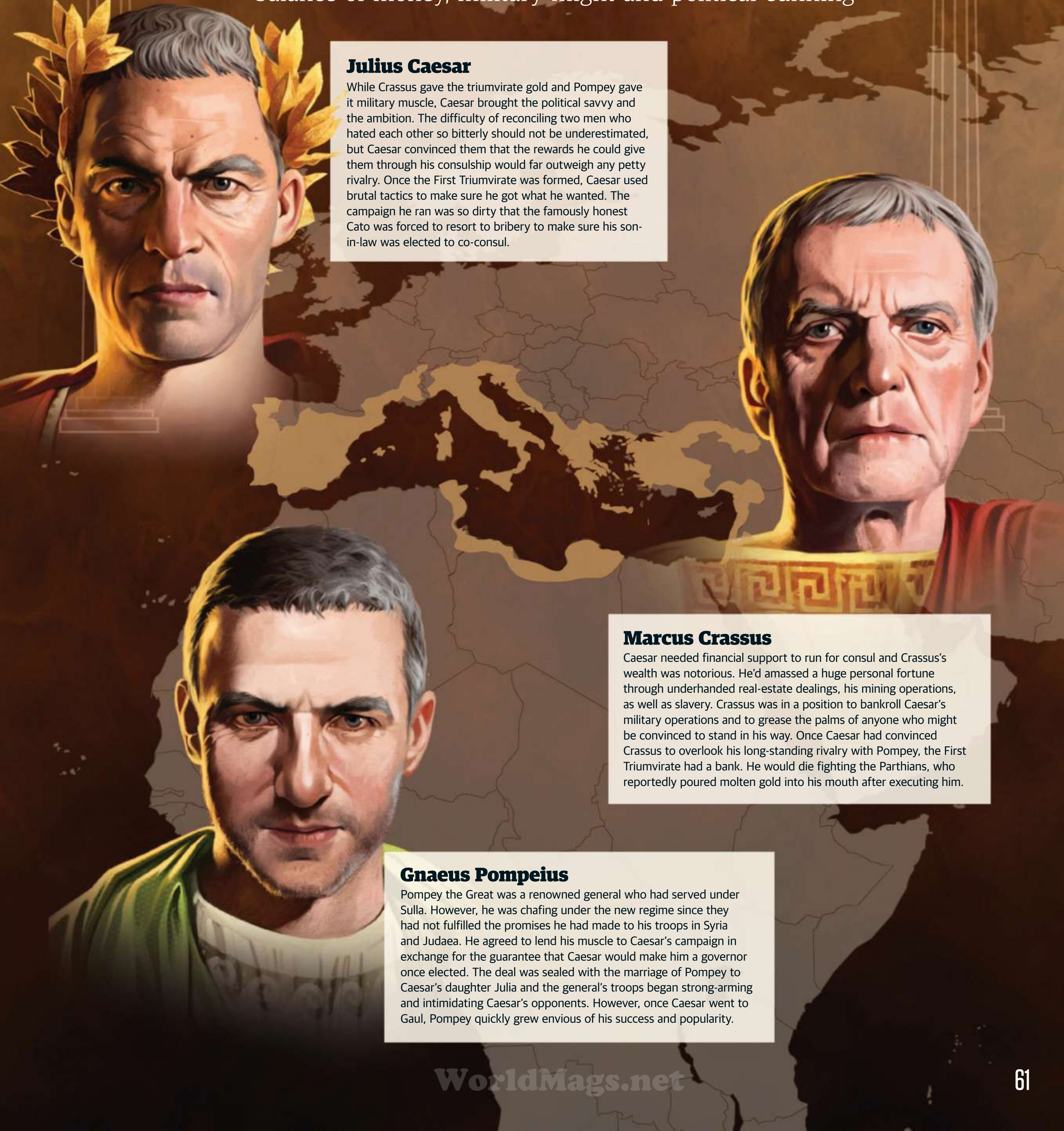
The Gallic and Germanic tribes were subdued between 57-55 BCE, at which point he sailed for Great Britain. There was no lasting success across the Channel but, as Cato had feared, tales of his ambitious exploits were getting back to Rome. Word reached the Senate that Gaul was pacified in 53 BCE. Cato could declare that Caesar was acting in his own interests and not those of the empire, but the people loved him for protecting Rome. Time and again, Caesar knew how to endear himself to the masses and camped near to Italy in winter to allow stories of his victories – not to mention treasure – to trickle back.

Even as he waged war across northern Europe, Caesar was aware that his time as proconsul would have to end. He knew all too well that once he returned to Rome he would face a serious list of charges, both from his time as consul and as a general. His attacks in Germany were so savage and fierce that he was forced to spin them to avoid losing popularity. But the farther Caesar took his army, the greater fortune he amassed and the more soldiers he was able to recruit. Unlike the Roman centurions, these men from Gaul and Germany had no loyalty to the empire; they were loyal to their general, and Caesar rewarded them well for it.

Back in Rome, the Senate was fully aware of Caesar's brutal strategies and growing military strength. Keen to ensure that the trial of Julius Caesar should proceed as smoothly as possible, they reached out to Caesar's old friend Pompey. Their relationship had always been built on the foundation of the

The First Triumvirate

Assembled by Caesar himself, this trio formed the perfect balance of money, military might and political cunning



Julius Caesar

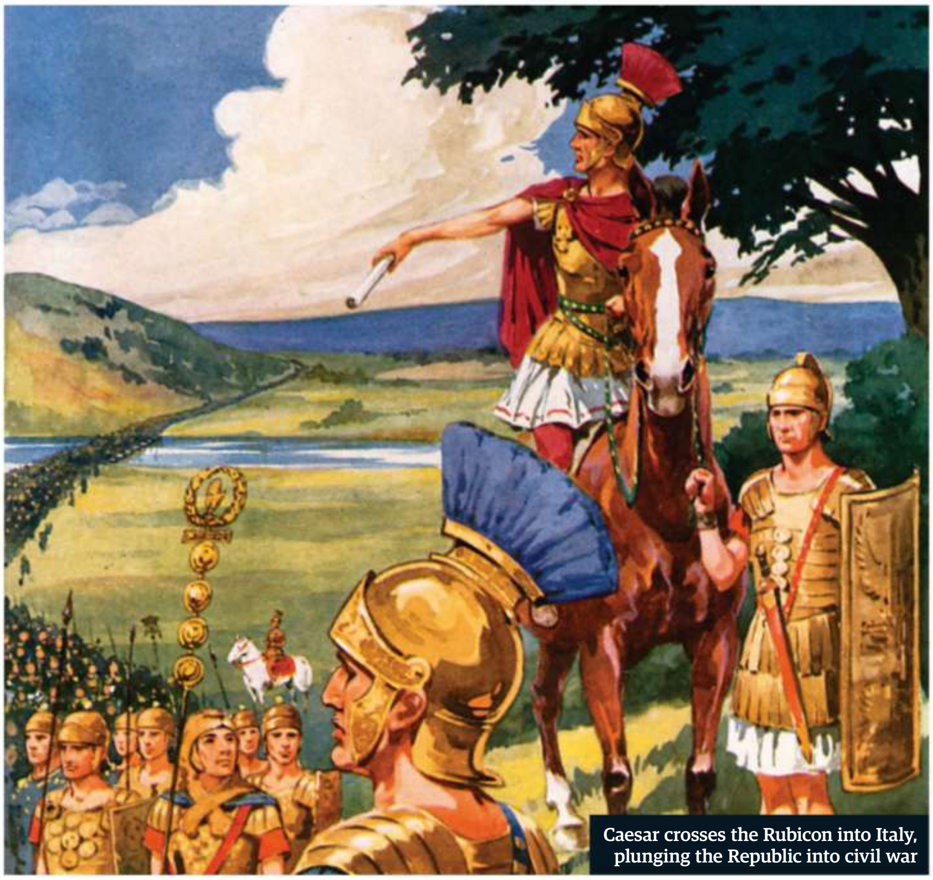
While Crassus gave the triumvirate gold and Pompey gave it military muscle, Caesar brought the political savvy and the ambition. The difficulty of reconciling two men who hated each other so bitterly should not be underestimated, but Caesar convinced them that the rewards he could give them through his consulship would far outweigh any petty rivalry. Once the First Triumvirate was formed, Caesar used brutal tactics to make sure he got what he wanted. The campaign he ran was so dirty that the famously honest Cato was forced to resort to bribery to make sure his son-in-law was elected to co-consul.

Marcus Crassus

Caesar needed financial support to run for consul and Crassus's wealth was notorious. He'd amassed a huge personal fortune through underhanded real-estate dealings, his mining operations, as well as slavery. Crassus was in a position to bankroll Caesar's military operations and to grease the palms of anyone who might be convinced to stand in his way. Once Caesar had convinced Crassus to overlook his long-standing rivalry with Pompey, the First Triumvirate had a bank. He would die fighting the Parthians, who reportedly poured molten gold into his mouth after executing him.

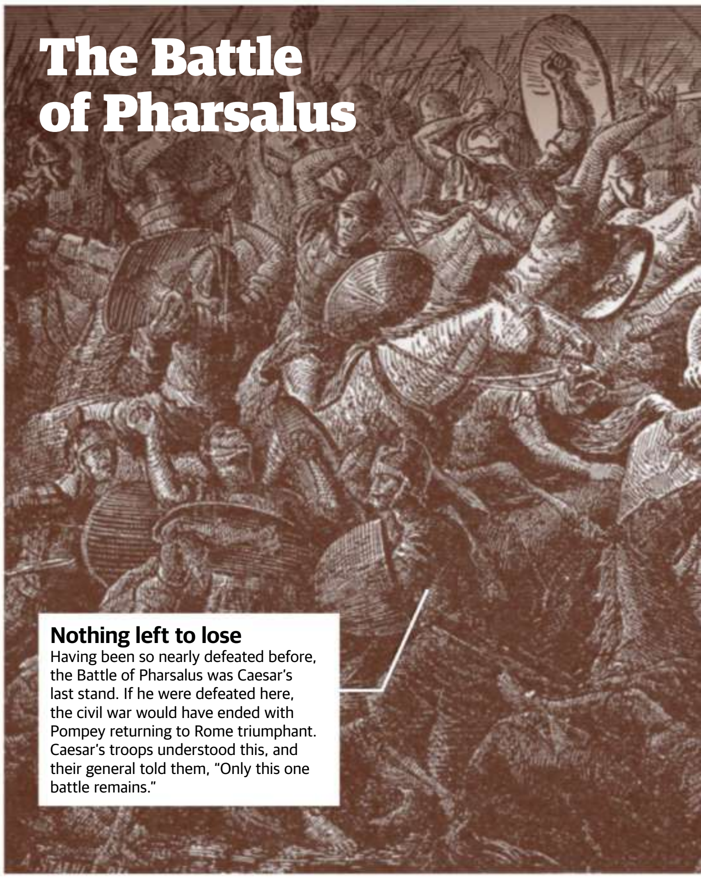
Gnaeus Pompeius

Pompey the Great was a renowned general who had served under Sulla. However, he was chafing under the new regime since they had not fulfilled the promises he had made to his troops in Syria and Judaea. He agreed to lend his muscle to Caesar's campaign in exchange for the guarantee that Caesar would make him a governor once elected. The deal was sealed with the marriage of Pompey to Caesar's daughter Julia and the general's troops began strong-arming and intimidating Caesar's opponents. However, once Caesar went to Gaul, Pompey quickly grew envious of his success and popularity.



Caesar crosses the Rubicon into Italy, plunging the Republic into civil war

The Battle of Pharsalus



Nothing left to lose

Having been so nearly defeated before, the Battle of Pharsalus was Caesar's last stand. If he were defeated here, the civil war would have ended with Pompey returning to Rome triumphant. Caesar's troops understood this, and their general told them, "Only this one battle remains."

latter's marriage to Caesar's daughter Julia, who had died in 54 BCE. Crassus, the third part of the triumvirate, had died while fighting the Parthians in 53, and Pompey was growing ever-more jealous of Caesar's success and popularity. With no ties left to the triumvirate, the Senate understood that Pompey would begin to question his allegiance.

The test came when Pompey was elected to sole consul in 52 BCE to handle an outbreak of rioting and his success gained the approval of the aristocrats. Buoyed by his victory and sudden popularity in the Senate, Pompey was convinced that removing Caesar from the political scene was the right thing to do. It would not be that easy. At this point, an attack from Gallic chieftain Vercingetorix, who knew of the riots in Rome, nearly destroyed Caesar. The Roman general had laid siege to the chieftain, but was forced to set up a wall to their rear when Gallic reinforcements arrived. The Romans came perilously close to defeat but an extraordinary last-minute counterattack won the day and finally confirmed that Caesar had conquered Gaul.

In late-50 BCE, preparations were underway for Caesar's return. Both Pompey and Caesar were ordered by the Senate to hand back their powers. But Caesar had no intention of being tried for his crimes and planned to run for consul in absentia. He hoped that the popularity he'd built up during his years at war would push the Senate into allowing this, and had published an account of his wars in Gaul to help remind the public of his many brave and successful military campaigns. The Gallic Wars was written using powerful, emotive language that could be read by anyone, not just the well-educated elite. Unlike Pompey, Caesar wasn't talking to the boxes – he was addressing the entire theatre. Despite this, the Senate refused and demanded that Caesar hand over command of his armies and return to Rome to face his accusers.

On 10 January 49 BCE, Caesar had essentially run out of options. If he did what the Senate demanded, he would be prosecuted and all his work would be for nothing. On the other hand, if he did not, it was an act of war.

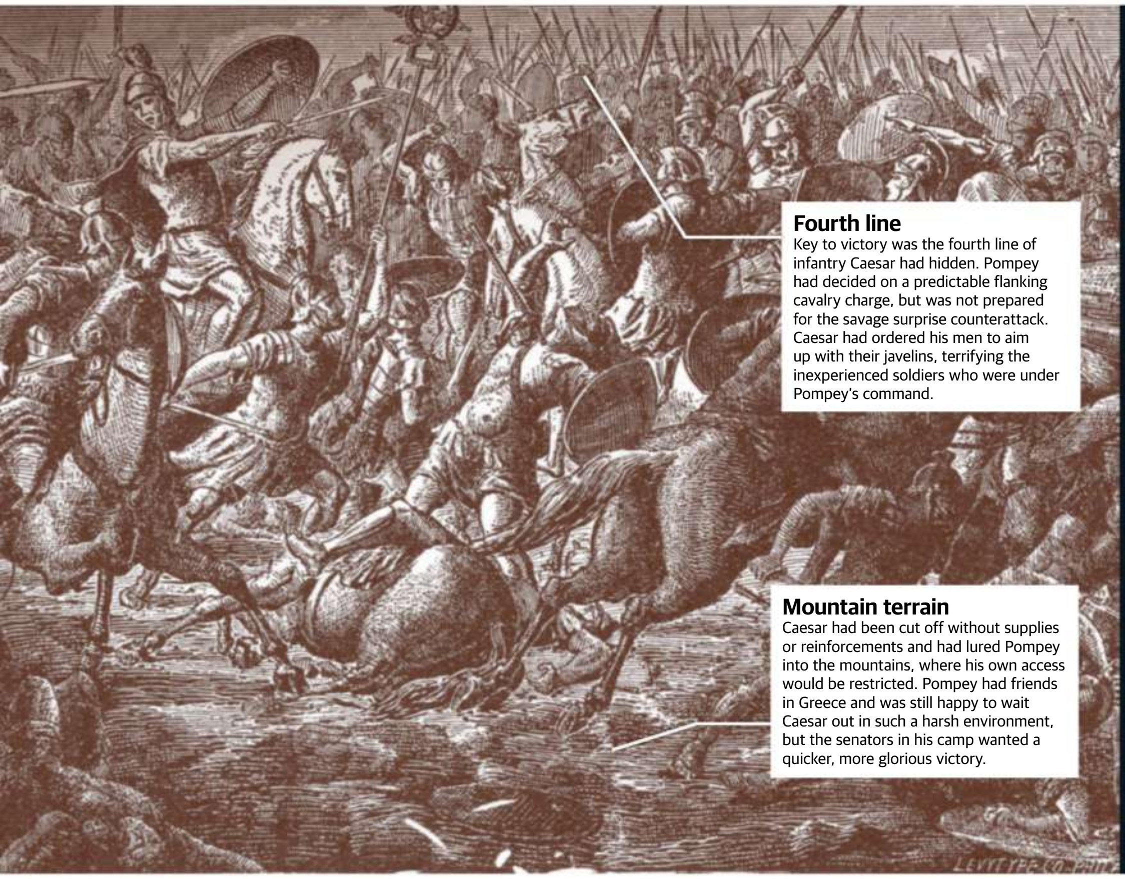
There are reports that Caesar was restless the night before, and even spoke with a spirit. Whatever happened and whatever hesitation he had felt, it was gone by morning. He assembled his forces and took the step that would change the course of history. "The die is cast," he proclaimed, and crossed the Rubicon River from Gaul into northern Italy. After decades of conflict with his enemies in the Senate, they were finally at war.

In their terror at his military might and daring, the Senate floundered. Caesar faced next to no opposition as he travelled into Italy. Pompey had blithely assumed that an attack wouldn't come until spring and most of his forces were still in Spain. After much panicked deliberating, Pompey announced that he would sail east to Greece to raise an army and that anybody opposing this plan would be a traitor. When Pompey slipped through his fingers, Caesar called a nearly deserted Senate together to approve military action in Spain.

While Pompey fled east , the new dictator wasted no time cutting a bloody swathe through his troops in the west. Pompey's forces were facing a determined, experienced army and Caesar's campaign was quick and brutal, decimating his opponents in just 27 days. Caesar then turned his attention back to his former ally and pursued him to Greece, where he was in the process of trying to raise another army. Caesar broke through a barricade set up by Bibulus, but he was cut off without supplies or reinforcements.

The subsequent fighting was disastrous and Caesar and his troops were on their last legs. Pompey had learned from his old friend's tactics in Gaul and set about starving his enemies. Caesar couldn't sit and wait Pompey out; if he was to win it would have to be on the battlefield. Finally, the two armies met at Pharsalus, where Caesar

> "Buoyed by his victory and popularity, Pompey was convinced that removing Caesar from the political scene was the right thing to do. It would not be that easy"



Fourth line
Key to victory was the fourth line of infantry Caesar had hidden. Pompey had decided on a predictable flanking cavalry charge, but was not prepared for the savage surprise counterattack. Caesar had ordered his men to aim up with their javelins, terrifying the inexperienced soldiers who were under Pompey's command.

Mountain terrain
Caesar had been cut off without supplies or reinforcements and had lured Pompey into the mountains, where his own access would be restricted. Pompey had friends in Greece and was still happy to wait Caesar out in such a harsh environment, but the senators in his camp wanted a quicker, more glorious victory.

Separated from his legions in Spain, Pompey had fled to Greece to raise another army. After decimating his old ally's forces in the west, Caesar followed him east.

Unlike Pompey, Caesar had no allies in Greece. He was outnumbered, and any reinforcements and supplies had been cut off. It was by sheer force of will that his army managed to keep up their campaign, but Caesar knew he was fast running out of time. He needed an even playing field and marched away from the sea and into the mountains, hoping Pompey would follow.

Pompey, meanwhile, had been buoyed by a major victory over Caesar's forces at Dyrrachium, but he was pained by the fact he could have beaten his enemy once and for all if he had pressed on. Once he caught up near Pharsalus, Pompey attempted to starve Caesar out, while Caesar in return wanted to coax him into open battle. The two sat at stalemate until Pompey's impatient senators told him they wanted victory now.

Despite holding the higher ground, the better supplies and the far superior numbers, Pompey used a tactic that Caesar knew all too well. While attempting to outflank Caesar's forces, Pompey did not see that his opponent had created a hidden fourth line of infantry. The flanking cavalry charged but did not anticipate the savage counterattack that followed. As instructed, Caesar's troops stabbed up at the cavalry with their javelins, terrifying Pompey's young aristocratic commanders who were unused to such a fierce tactic. The cavalry retreated and this fourth line gave chase, followed by the fresh third line. Pompey's forces were crushed and the general himself fled to Egypt. The decisive battle of the Caesar's Civil War had been won.

delivered a stunningly decisive victory against overwhelming odds (looked at in more detail in the boxout). Once again, Pompey was in the wind.

As Pompey fled south to Egypt, Caesar returned to Rome to pronounce himself dictator, but resigned after just 11 days before picking up the chase once again. However, if he expected a fight, he wasn't going to get one. Pompey had been betrayed by the very people he had sought sanctuary from, and his corpse was presented to Caesar by the child pharaoh Ptolemy XIII as a tribute. They didn't get the reaction they were expecting. Caesar was reduced to tears and ordered the execution of those who had slain his enemy. The final obstacle to his absolute power had been removed.

Looking out on the Nile, Caesar was able to see what such power could mean. He fell for Cleopatra after she reportedly smuggled herself into his rooms wrapped in a carpet and, acting out of sympathy for her and his own anger about the execution of Pompey, he fought with her against her brother Ptolemy in the Egyptian Civil War. The fighting that ensued was known as the Siege of Alexandria, during which Ptolemy refused Caesar's offers of peace and paid the ultimate price, drowning during the Battle of the Nile. The Egyptian queen claimed to have had a son named Caesarion with her lover, but he would never acknowledge that the boy was his. Once Cleopatra was firmly established on the throne of Egypt, Caesar sailed to Asia Minor to quash a rebellion led by Pharnaces. His victory was so swift that it led to his famous boast "Veni, vidi, vici." The words "I came, I saw, I conquered" weren't specific to this single battle. Caesar was unstoppable.

Even as he celebrated victory, Caesar knew he had spent too long abroad and needed to establish and maintain his power in Rome. It was vital that power be absolute, but gave the appearance of not being so. He was elected as Rome's dictator in 48 BCE for a term of one year. He spent this time mopping up the final resistance to his rule, including Pompey's sons in Spain and the elusive Cato in Utica, Tunisia. The hunt for the latter would take Caesar to North Africa, where he would defeat the troops of Scipio and offer them no mercy. In a final act of defiance, Cato took his own life rather than face an empire under Caesar's sole rule.

The Senate rewarded Caesar's triumphs by appointing him dictator for ten years. With Pompey's supporters disposed of, Caesar returned to Rome to reform the empire. His plan was threefold. He needed to ensure that there was no military resistance to him; he needed to deal with the serious debt that Rome had accumulated during its years at war; and he needed to turn the empire from a collection of states into one nation. Between 48 BCE and his assassination in 44, Caesar would show himself to be far more than a military dictator, not only laying the foundations for but taking the first decisive steps towards making the Roman Empire what it would become. The 60-odd men who conspired against and assassinated him in the Senate on 15 March 44 BCE may have succeeded in their task, but Caesar's legacy had long since been assured.

Caesar the dictator

Throughout his regime, Caesar had used the approval of the people to his advantage. When he returned to Rome having defeated Pompey, Caesar knew it was crucial to keep the people onside. Mistakes were made along the way though. When he celebrated his win over Pompey's son in Spain, it was seen as a serious faux-pas as such festivities were reserved for victories over foreign foes, not the sons of former consuls.

His political reforms, however, addressed some of the major concerns many had aired. He understood that, if Rome was to truly be an empire, it could no longer hold back the benefits of living under Roman rule from those living outside Italy. With this in mind, he opened up citizenship to those living in Gaul, and encouraged people to relocate to the empire's territories. He reduced debt and he ensured that soldiers who had fought for him would have land to settle on. He also introduced the new calendar, aligning the months with the solar year rather than the Moon.

To ensure opposition against him in the Senate was minimal, Caesar expanded their ranks. Each position was now open to more candidates, making the aristocratic elite that opposed him less of a majority. Although he wore the purple robes of a king, sat on a throne in the Senate and had his face on the empire's coins, Caesar was careful to keep up appearances that he was a duly elected official. The ease with which his loyal general Mark Antony was able to step into power and pursue those who had assassinated Caesar shows the level of popularity the late ruler had maintained during his years as Rome's dictator.

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Alexander the Great

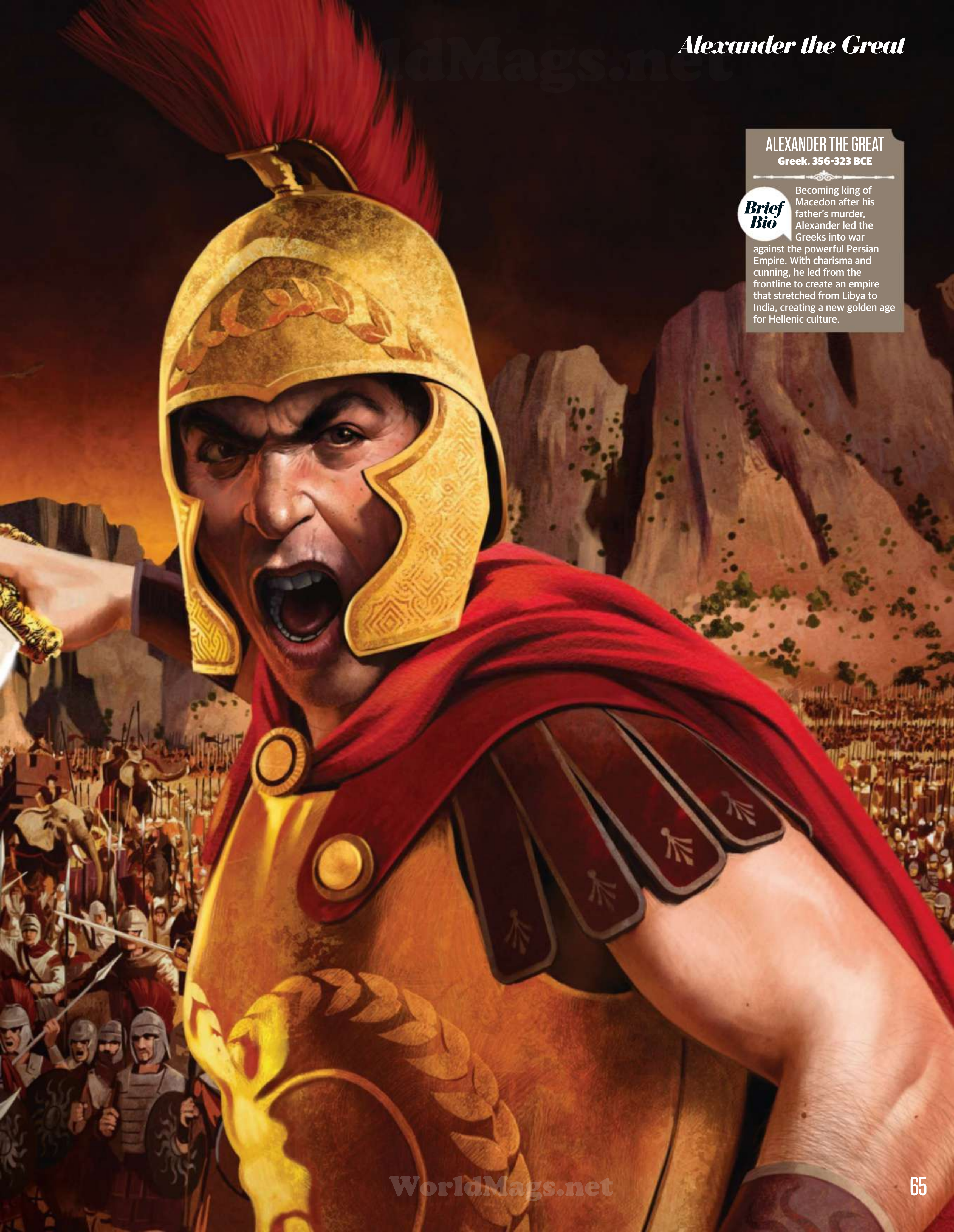
At the head of the world's most feared fighting force, Alexander the Great took for himself a vast empire through the sword, and has been called a hero, tyrant and a god

The king died quickly, his white robes soaked red. The laughter and rejoicing of a royal marriage - the wedding of his daughter - had quickly turned to screams and wails of lament as Pausanias, a member of the king's personal guard, turned on his master, driving a dagger between his ribs. Tripping on a vine as he fled the scene for his getaway horse, the assassin was brutally stabbed to death by the furious spears of pursuing guards. Philip II died as he had lived: awash with blood and surrounded by intrigue. His legacy would leave bloody footprints across the whole of Central Asia and the Middle East.

Over a 23-year reign from 359 to 336 BCE, the king of Macedon - a mountainous land overlapping modern northern Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia - had gone from ruler of a barbarous backwater of tribal highlanders to the overlord of the fractious Greek kingdoms and city-states. Bringing his rival monarchs in line through war, military alliance and marriage, Philip II had reformed the Macedonian army into one of the most feared fighting forces in the ancient world, with a view to bloodying their most hated foes, the Achaemenid Empire of Persia, which had humbled and humiliated the Greeks in the Greco-Persian Wars a century earlier. Aged just 20, Alexander III of Macedon - soon to be remembered as Alexander the Great - took the throne as the head of a military machine on the brink of war and legendary status, and gleefully drove it full throttle over the edge.

Alexander had been groomed for greatness from birth, but he was no pampered prince. Tutored by the austere Leonidas, who forbade all luxury, the general Lysimachus and the philosopher Aristotle, Alexander was proficient with weapons, horse riding and playing the lyre, and an expert in ethics, philosophy and the skills of debate. He trained daily in pankration, an Ancient Greek martial art, which focused on savage grapples, punches, kicks and choke holds. A Renaissance man before the Renaissance, he was schooled in the skills to conquer and the knowledge to rule. At 16 he had governed Macedon as regent while his father warred far from home, the young heir putting down rebellious tribes in Thrace and founding a whole new city, Alexandropolis - the first of many that would bear his name.

Like so many civilisations before and after them, the Ancient Greeks loved to gossip. Philip's death, they said, was an act of revenge from his scorned lover Pausanias, but two other people immediately benefited: Olympias, mother of Alexander and once-favoured wife of Philip, had been in danger of losing her status to a younger bride; and Alexander himself, who promptly executed all

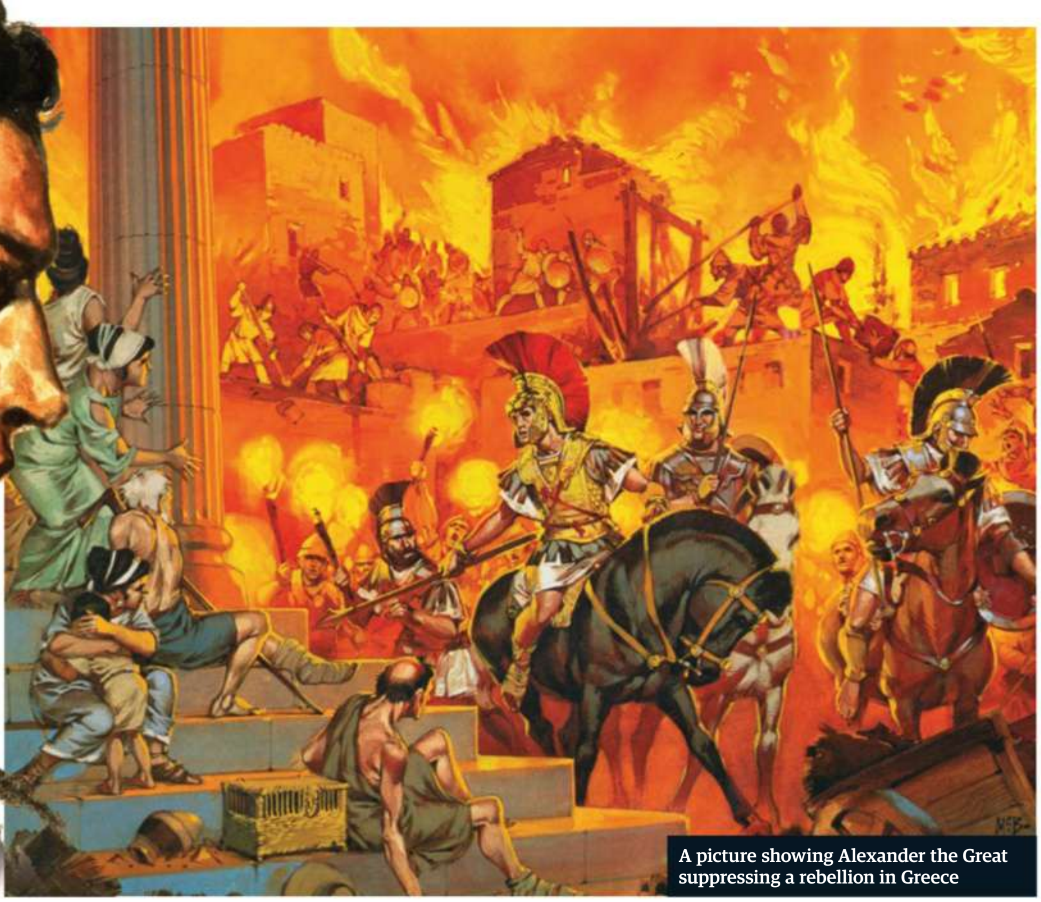


ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Greek, 356-323 BCE

Brief Bio

Becoming king of Macedon after his father's murder, Alexander led the Greeks into war against the powerful Persian Empire. With charisma and cunning, he led from the frontline to create an empire that stretched from Libya to India, creating a new golden age for Hellenic culture.



A picture showing Alexander the Great suppressing a rebellion in Greece

other contenders for the crown and crushed rebellions across Greece. Olympias, too, set about consolidating her power, having Cleopatra Eurydice, her replacement as consort to the dead king, and her baby daughter burned alive.

> "He trained in pankration – an Ancient Greek martial art, which focused on savage grapples, punches and kicks"

The dubious heroes of myth were Alexander's own blueprint for greatness. With legendary figures on both sides of the family tree, it was hard not to be convinced of his own special destiny. His father's bloodline claimed descent from Hercules – the son of Zeus and bull-wrestling demigod of Twelve Labours fame – while his mother's family looked up to Achilles, the all-but-invulnerable champion of the fabled Siege of Troy. Omens and portents prefigured every decision, but as much as this ambitious new king gave every appearance of being a slave to destiny – looking for meaning in flights of birds and consulting oracles at every turn – he steered destiny himself, consciously building a legend that would lift his accomplishments well beyond those of his father and into the same world of the legendary journeys and heroic battles that had once inspired him. In just shy of a decade, he crushed the life out of the once-mighty Persian state and expanded the borders of his domain from Libya to India to create a mighty empire.

Fittingly, this conquest began with some mythical brand management. Picking up where Philip II's army of invasion had been poised, Alexander crossed the Dardanelles – the narrow channel connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, and Europe from Asia Minor – in early 334 BCE with 47,000 soldiers and mercenaries from across Macedon and the Greek kingdoms. Leaping from his warship in full ceremonial armour, vast plumed helmet and golden breastplate, the emperor-to-be sent a spear whistling through the air to crash into the undefended soil of Asia Minor. It was the first blow in a war that would claim for Alexander over 200,000 square miles of land and leave between 75,000 and 200,000 dead.

The coastline of what is now Turkey was littered with Greek cities ruled by the Persian invaders, and of them Troy had particular significance for Alexander. The alleged site of his maternal ancestor Achilles' most celebrated victory and tragic death, Alexander carried with him on his journey the story of the Trojan War, Homer's epic Iliad (a gift from his tutor Aristotle), and quoted from it often. First, he had the tomb of Achilles opened so he could pay tribute, then riding to a nearby temple of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, the Macedon king was shown what they claimed were the weapons of Achilles. There, he took down a shield, replacing it with his own. Alexander wasn't merely content sharing a fanciful familial association with Achilles; he wanted to rival him, visiting this site of bloodshed and heroism, and taking the mantle of one of Ancient Greece's greatest heroes.

Was it a propaganda stunt that spurred on his army, or did he believe it? His fierce pragmatism and ambition would suggest both – a dangerous and unpredictable combination that made him one of the battlefield's most iconic generals.

First meeting the Persians in battle in 334 BCE, Alexander quickly established a formula for swift and decisive victory at the Battle of the Granicus, just outside of his beloved Troy. Leading from the front ranks, a feint drew the stronger Persian units and their battle-hardened Greek mercenaries out, spreading their line thin and allowing Alexander's cavalry to hammer through their scattered ranks. He was welcomed as a liberator by the Greek subjects of Asia Minor, and endeavoured to win over the local population too. Claiming to distrust tyrants, he appointed local rulers and allowed them relative independence, but with a new centralised tax system he ensured their autonomy was reliant upon his handouts.

With Persia's control of the vast expanse of Asia Minor resting on its superior navy, Alexander opted to scatter his own vessels rather than fight a sea war he couldn't win, and marched down the coast to take the enemy's largest naval port, Halicarnassus – now Bodrum in Turkey – by land, forcing his way through the walls until the Persians

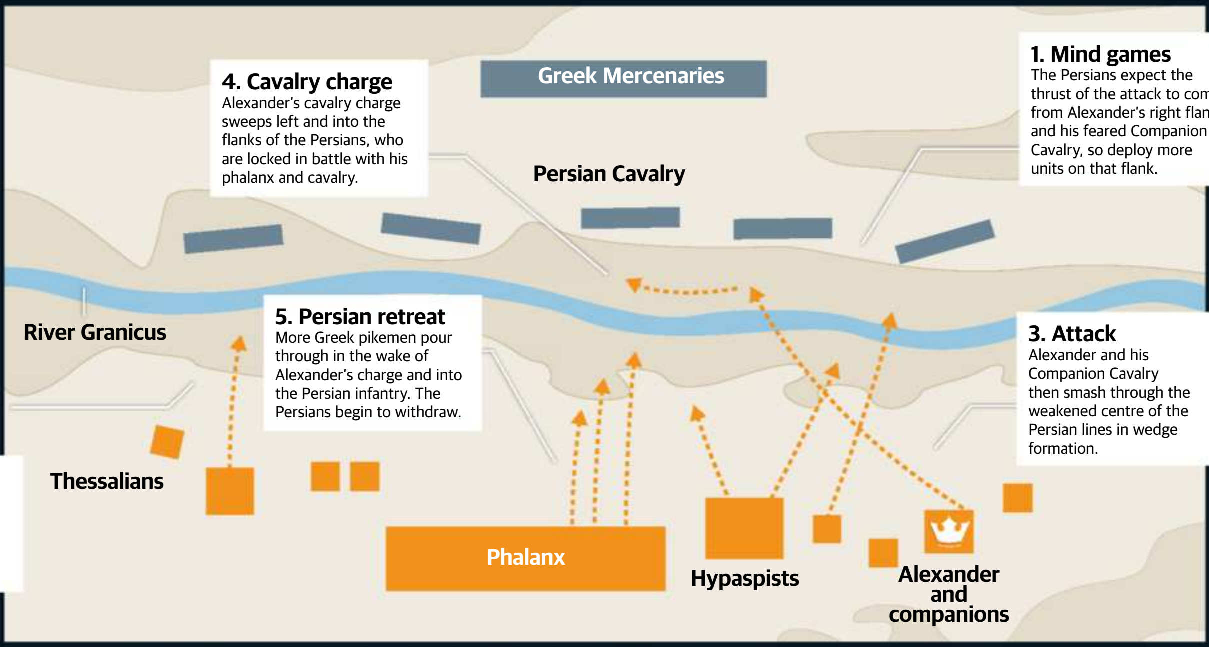
Battle Of The Granicus (334 BCE)

Alexander's first victory against the Persian Empire

The first real clash between Persian troops and Alexander's newly minted invasion force remains the best example of his signature battle tactic.

Using heavy cavalry to prise apart the weakest part of the enemy line while his finely drilled infantry kept the bulk of the enemy tangled up on their spears, it relied upon the professionalism of Macedon's army, as well as the unique talents of its core units.

It showed that Alexander knew how best to use the forces that his father had amassed.



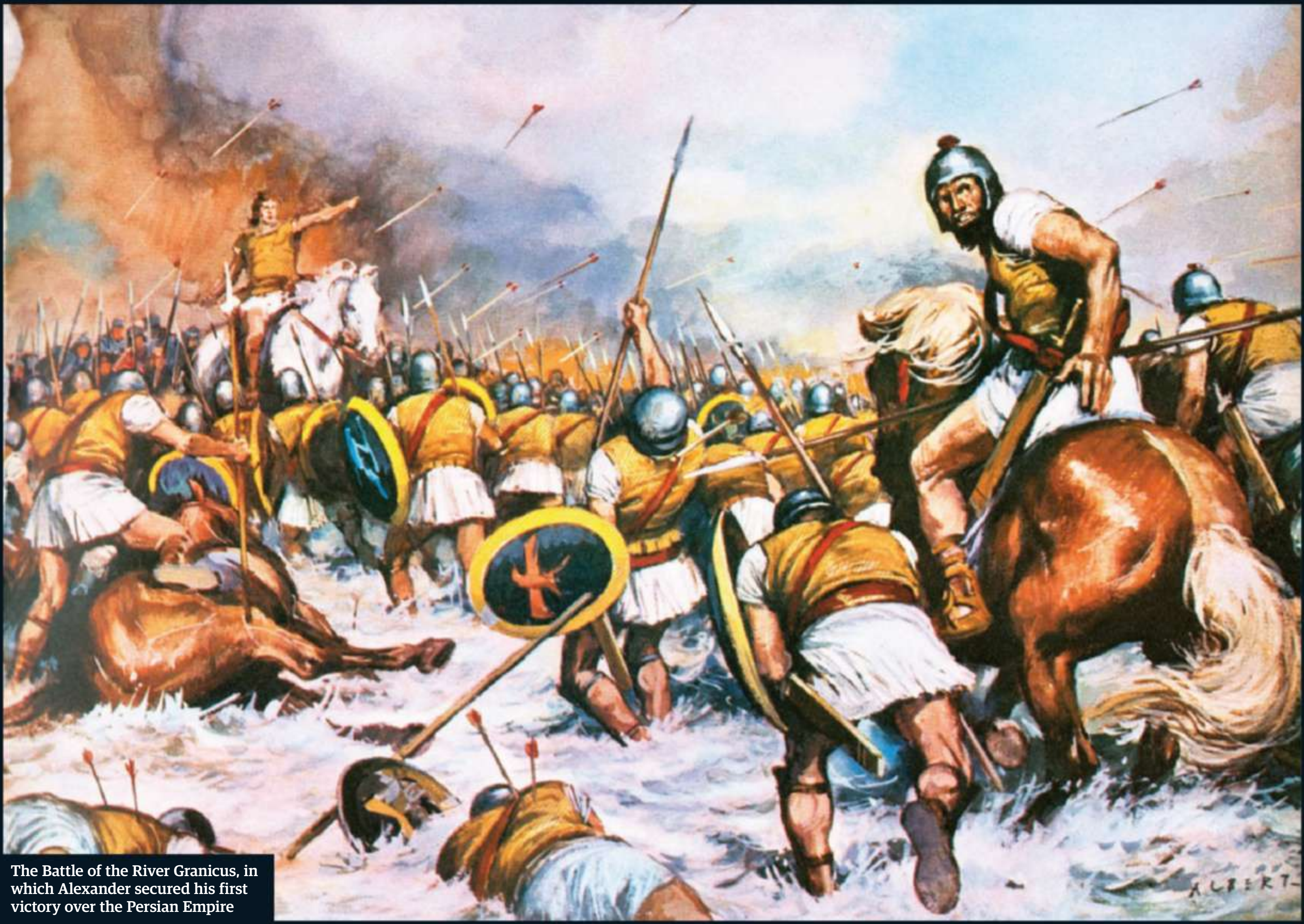
1. Mind games
The Persians expect the thrust of the attack to come from Alexander's right flank and his feared Companion Cavalry, so deploy more units on that flank.

2. Feint
Alexander's Thessalian cavalry and pikemen feint from the left. The Persians reinforce the line from the centre to drive them back.

3. Attack
Alexander and his Companion Cavalry then smash through the weakened centre of the Persian lines in wedge formation.

4. Cavalry charge
Alexander's cavalry charge sweeps left and into the flanks of the Persians, who are locked in battle with his phalanx and cavalry.

5. Persian retreat
More Greek pikemen pour through in the wake of Alexander's charge and into the Persian infantry. The Persians begin to withdraw.



The Battle of the River Granicus, in which Alexander secured his first victory over the Persian Empire had to abandon their own city. After passing through Cappadocia with scarcely any resistance thanks to incompetent local governors in 333 BCE, Darius III, the Persian Shahanshah - king of kings - could stomach this embarrassment no longer, and with an army that outnumbered the Greeks by two to one, confronted Alexander at the Battle of Issus. Were the king to fail here then Darius' army would be able to link up with his powerful navy and Alexander's whole campaign, resting as it did on his thin line of victories down the coast, would be wiped out and all dreams of Greek civilisation free from the menaces of its aggressive Eastern neighbour would spill out into the dust like so much wasted Macedonian blood. At Issus, like many battles before and after, Alexander rode up and down his ranks of assembled men to deliver an address worthy of heroes, playing on old glories and grudges.

"He excited the Illyrians and Thracians by describing the enemy's wealth and treasures, and the Greeks by putting them in mind of their wars of old, and their deadly hatred towards the Persians," wrote the historian Justin in the 3rd century CE. "He reminded the Macedonians at one time of their conquests in Europe, and at another of their desire to subdue Asia, boasting that no troops in the world had been found a match for them, and assuring them that this battle would put an end to their labours and crown their glory."

With shock etched upon his face, Darius fled the battlefield as the Greek charge cut through his ranks like a scythe, with Alexander at its head, crashing straight through the Persian flanks and then into their rearguard. With their king gone they began a chaotic and humiliating retreat. With only one Persian port left - Tyre, in what is now Lebanon - and the hill fort of Gaza in modern Palestine both falling in 332 BCE, the thinly stretched Achaemenid defences west of Babylon quickly crumbled or withdrew before the relentless march of Alexander.

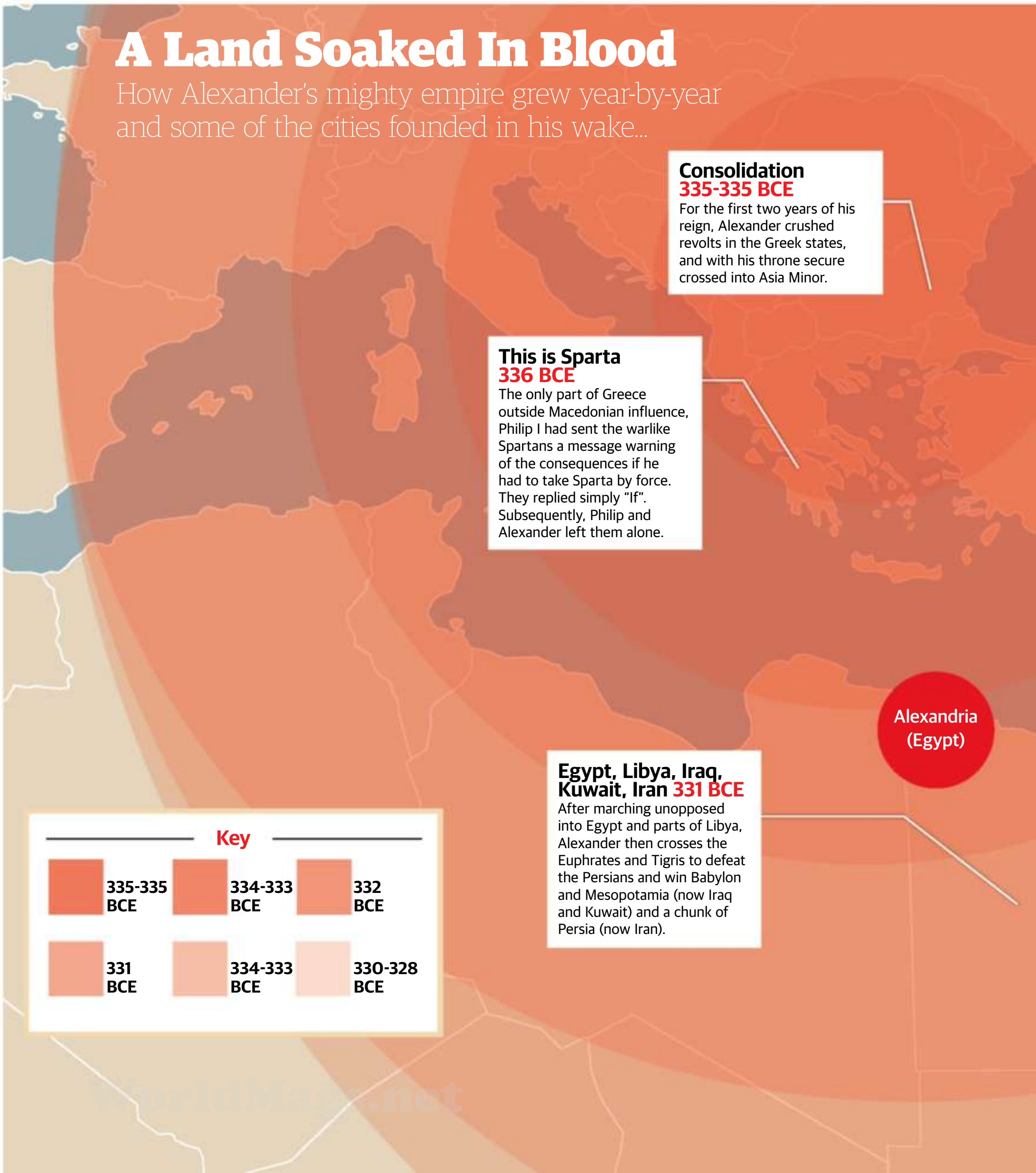
Unexpectedly, he then turned his attention not east toward the enemy's exposed heart, but west in the direction of Egypt and Libya. They, like the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, would welcome him as a saviour. With no standing army and whole swathes of the country in the hands of Egyptian rebels, the Persian governor handed over control of the province outright. The last set of invaders had disrespected their gods, so perhaps the Egyptians were keen to take advantage of Alexander's vanity and safeguard their faith by placing this new warlord right at the heart of it. Maybe, too, Alexander had seen how illusionary Persian authority was in Egypt, and wanted to try a different tack. He may have been one of the world's greatest generals, but he knew the sword was not the only path to acquiring new territory.

Riding out to the famous Oracle of Amun - the Egyptian answer to Zeus - at the Siwa oasis, Alexander was welcomed into the inner sanctum of this ancient temple, an honour usually afforded only to the ordained priests of Amun, while his entourage was forced to wait in the courtyard. The exact details of Alexander's exchange with the Oracle remain a mystery, but the end result was unambiguous. Alexander was now more than merely a hero of legend. Even the myth of Achilles reborn could scarcely contain his ambition, and he declared himself the son of Zeus. His worship spread across Egypt, where he was raised to the rank of Pharaoh. This didn't sit well with Alexander's countrymen, but here at least, the king didn't push it.

> "The power-drunk Alexander burnt the palace to the ground in, it is believed, retaliation for the sack of Athens"

"[Alexander] bore himself haughtily towards the barbarians," recalled the army's official historian Plutarch, "and like one fully persuaded of his divine birth and parentage, but with the Greeks it was within limits and somewhat rarely that he assumed his own divinity." Despite his 'haughtiness', Alexander had been raised on tales of the Egyptian gods from his mother, and Greeks - the philosopher Plato among them - had long journeyed to this ancient land to study in what they regarded as the birthplace of civilisation. Standing amid the great pyramids and temples, the 25-year-old Alexander either saw around him an ancient power to be held in great respect or feats of long-dead god-kings that he had to better.

The result was the city of Alexandria, planned in detail by the king, from wide boulevards and great temples to defences and plumbing. Construction began in 331 BCE, and it remains the second-largest city and largest seaport in Egypt, linking the king's new world to his old one, both by trade across the Mediterranean and by culture. In making Alexandria the crossroads between two great civilisations, a great centre of learning where Greek and Egyptian religion, medicine, art, mathematics and philosophy could be bound together was created, and the city came to symbolise the



A Land Soaked In Blood

How Alexander's mighty empire grew year-by-year and some of the cities founded in his wake...

Consolidation
335-335 BCE
For the first two years of his reign, Alexander crushed revolts in the Greek states, and with his throne secure crossed into Asia Minor.

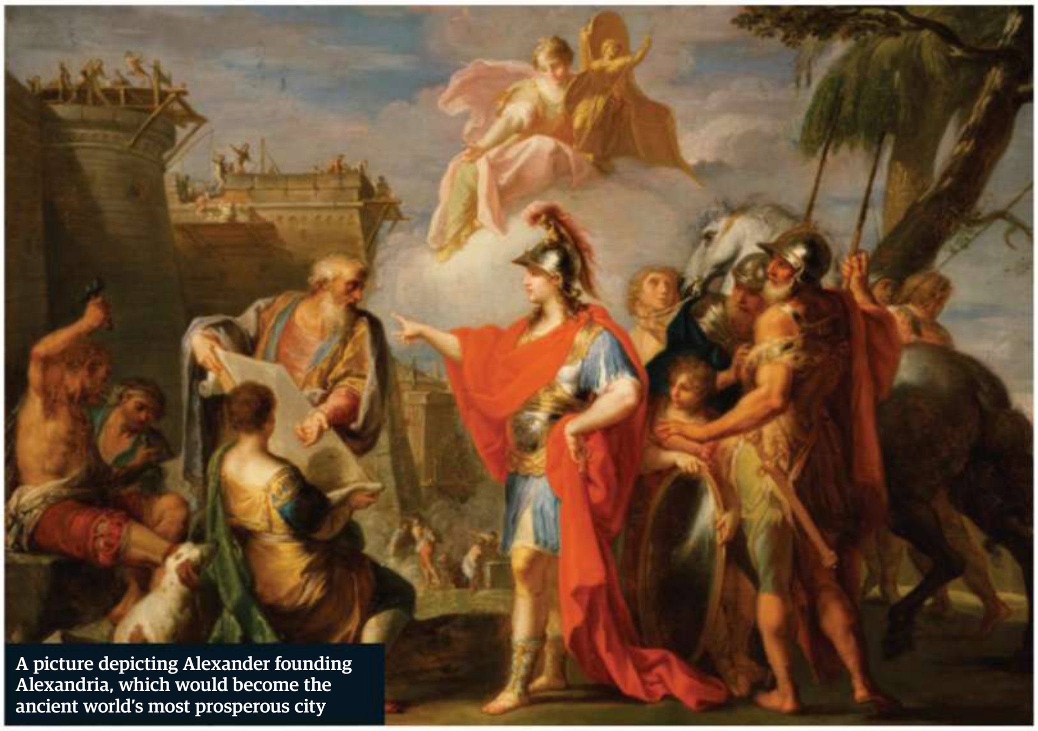
This is Sparta
336 BCE
The only part of Greece outside Macedonian influence, Philip I had sent the warlike Spartans a message warning of the consequences if he had to take Sparta by force. They replied simply "If". Subsequently, Philip and Alexander left them alone.

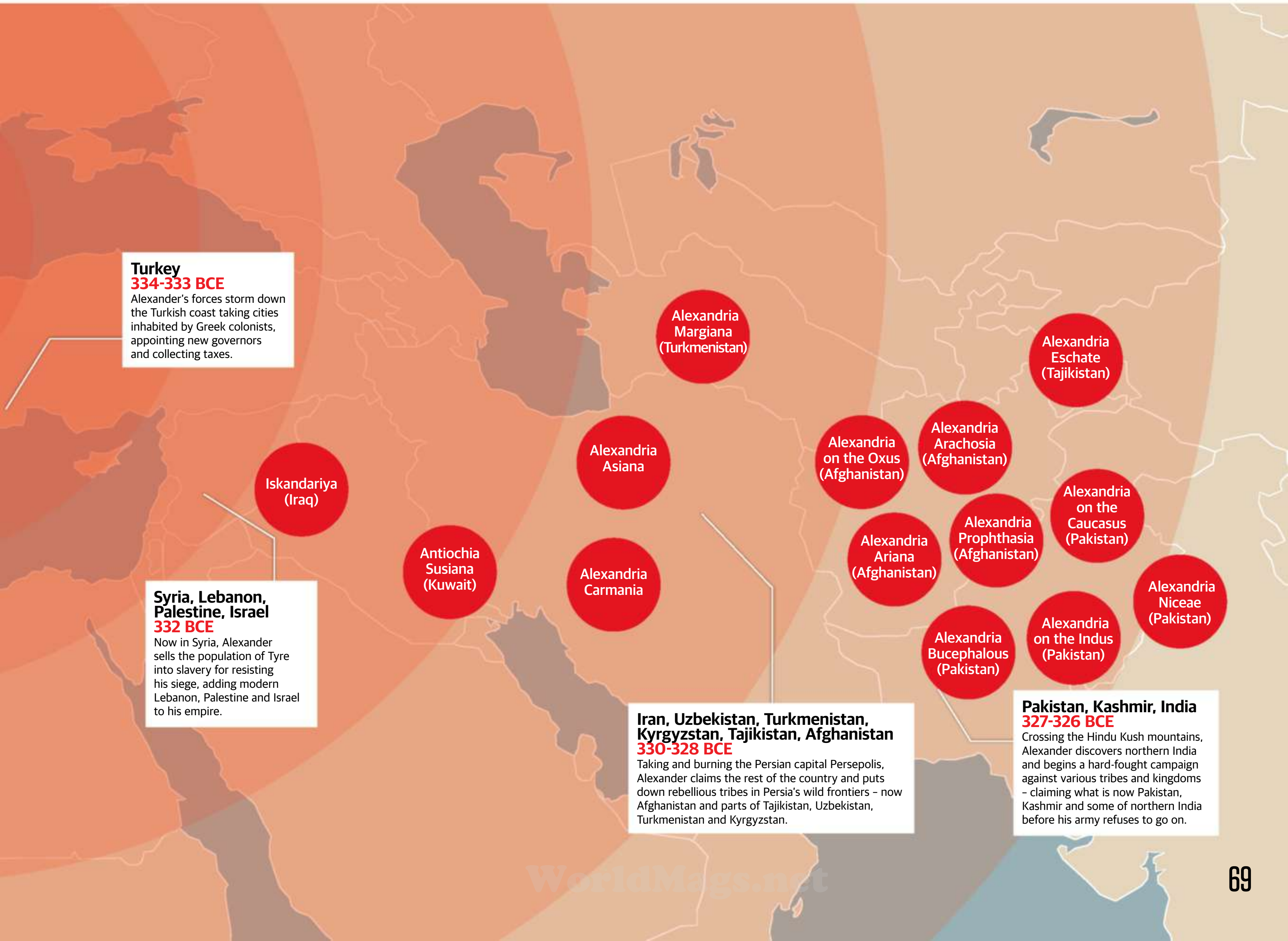
Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran 331 BCE
After marching unopposed into Egypt and parts of Libya, Alexander then crosses the Euphrates and Tigris to defeat the Persians and win Babylon and Mesopotamia (now Iraq and Kuwait) and a chunk of Persia (now Iran).

better aspects of Alexander's nature, his desire for education and learning and his patronage. Darker days, though, lay ahead.

Like an angel of death, Alexander turned from his 'liberation' of the Achaemenid Empire's downtrodden subjects and drove east with a vengeance. Now in the belly of the beast, Alexander's less heroic qualities were beginning to show themselves with greater regularity - an arrogance, cruelty and obsessive drive that had he failed in his conquest, would have been remembered as the madness of a tyrant rather than the drive of a king.

Breaking out of a pincer movement to defeat Darius again at the Battle of Gaugamela in 331 BCE, Alexander seized Babylonia. Provincial rulers loyal to the humiliated king of kings promptly surrendered. With his authority crumbling, Darius was stabbed by one of his generals, Bessus, and left by the roadside, where pursuing Greek scouts found him in 330 BCE. Overcome with pity - and perhaps respect for this foe they had chased across mountains and deserts - they offered the dying king of kings water from a nearby spring. In declaring himself Shahanshah, Bessus's throne was


A picture depicting Alexander founding Alexandria, which would become the ancient world's most prosperous city


Alexandria Margiana (Turkmenistan)
Alexandria Eschate (Tajikistan)
Alexandria Asiana
Alexandria on the Oxus (Afghanistan)
Alexandria Arachosia (Afghanistan)
Iskandariya (Iraq)
Alexandria on the Caucasus (Pakistan)
Alexandria Prophthasia (Afghanistan)
Alexandria Ariana (Afghanistan)
Antiochia Susiana (Kuwait)
Alexandria Carmania
Alexandria Niceae (Pakistan)
Alexandria on the Indus (Pakistan)
Alexandria Bucephalous (Pakistan)

Turkey
334-333 BCE
Alexander's forces storm down the Turkish coast taking cities inhabited by Greek colonists, appointing new governors and collecting taxes.

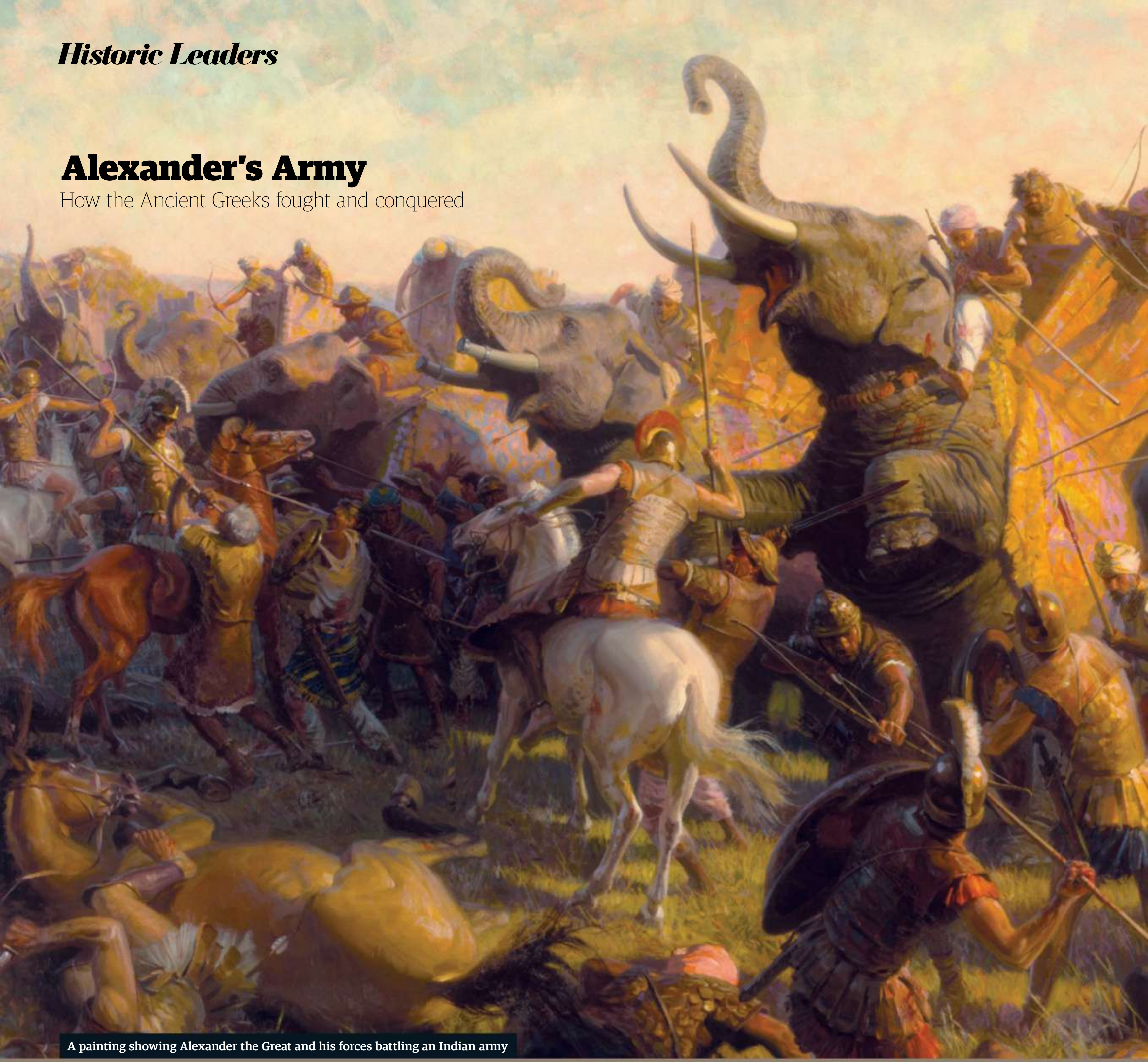
Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel
332 BCE
Now in Syria, Alexander sells the population of Tyre into slavery for resisting his siege, adding modern Lebanon, Palestine and Israel to his empire.

Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan
330-328 BCE
Taking and burning the Persian capital Persepolis, Alexander claims the rest of the country and puts down rebellious tribes in Persia's wild frontiers - now Afghanistan and parts of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Pakistan, Kashmir, India
327-326 BCE
Crossing the Hindu Kush mountains, Alexander discovers northern India and begins a hard-fought campaign against various tribes and kingdoms - claiming what is now Pakistan, Kashmir and some of northern India before his army refuses to go on.

Alexander's Army

How the Ancient Greeks fought and conquered



A painting showing Alexander the Great and his forces battling an Indian army

1. Companion cavalry

Strengths

Well trained, wedge formation made turning easier, heavy bronze armour.

Weaknesses

Vulnerable to tightly packed infantry.

How did Alexander deploy them?

Led by Alexander personally, the Companion Cavalry were the unstoppable knights of Macedonia. Usually stationed on the right flank, they would punch through the enemy lines with their xyston lances and then wheel round to charge the rear.

2. Thessalian Cavalry

Strengths

Well trained, diamond formation for manoeuvrability, variety of weapons.

Weaknesses

Lighter armour than most heavy cavalry.

How did Alexander deploy them?

Similar to the Companion Cavalry, the Thessalian Cavalry's lighter armour and shorter spears and javelins made them an effective defensive unit. Stationed on the left flank, they could go where they were needed to see off any attackers.

3. Hoplites

Hoplites were the basic foot soldier of the Greek states.

Strengths

Versatile and adaptable.

Weaknesses

Low training, light armour.

How did Alexander deploy them?

Hoplites were the citizen men-at-arms of the other Greek states and one of the army's main cornerstones. Versatile but not necessarily as well-trained or heavily armoured as other units, Hoplites were placed behind the phalanx to prevent the army being encircled.

4. Phalanx

Strengths

The phalanx formation is devastating against cavalry, well trained and fast moving.

Weaknesses

Vulnerable in the flanks and rear, lightly equipped.

How did Alexander deploy them?

Created by Alexander's father the well-drilled and fast-moving pikemen fought in the dreaded Macedonian phalanx with their 18-foot sarissa lance. Deployed in the centre of the battle line, the phalanx could rush forward to tie down enemy cavalry or infantry.

5. Hypaspists

The Hypaspists were Alexander's close-quarter shock troops.

Strengths

Versatile close combat specialists, well-trained veterans.

Weaknesses

Vulnerable to cavalry and massed infantry.

How did Alexander deploy them?

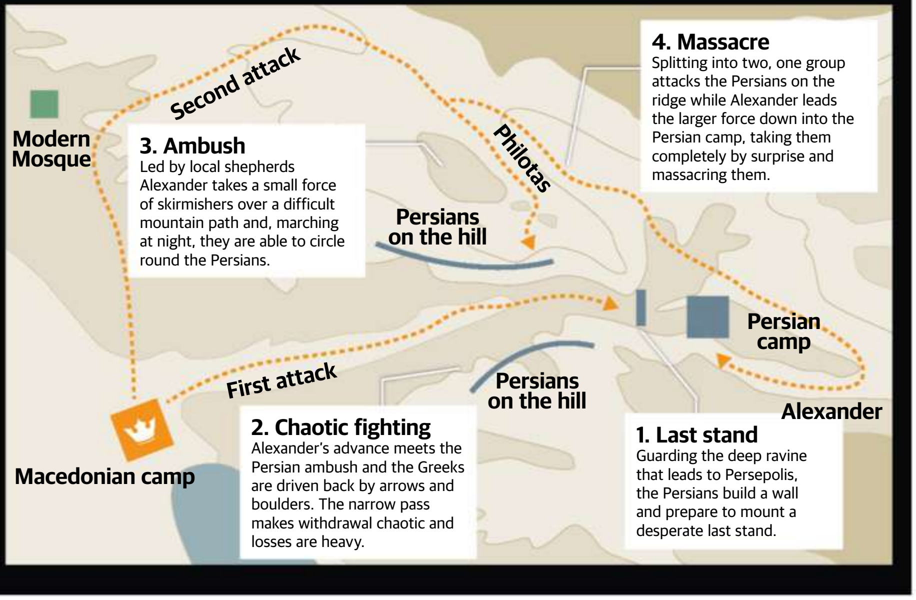
Macedonia's elite commandos, the Hypaspists carried large round shields, thrusting spears and swords, and were placed on the flank of the Foot Companions for their protection. Devastating in closed spaces.

Battle Of The Persian Gate (331 BCE)

Alexander turns defeat into victory to take the Persian capital

Failure could have left Alexander's Persia divided between the Macedonian king and usurper Bessus, vulnerable to revolt and invasion from central Asia.

Despite a rare crushing defeat in the bloody bottleneck of the Persian ambush, Alexander was able to make use of local knowledge, as well as his hardy skirmishers and turn the wild terrain in his favour, ambushing the Persians in turn and decimating them with his two forces. Historians have called this victory 'complete' and 'decisive' and it left him able to take the ancient capital of Persepolis unopposed and claim its massive wealth for himself. On leaving the city he burnt it to the ground.



4. Massacre
Splitting into two, one group attacks the Persians on the ridge while Alexander leads the larger force down into the Persian camp, taking them completely by surprise and massacring them.

3. Ambush
Led by local shepherds Alexander takes a small force of skirmishers over a difficult mountain path and, marching at night, they are able to circle round the Persians.

2. Chaotic fighting
Alexander's advance meets the Persian ambush and the Greeks are driven back by arrows and boulders. The narrow pass makes withdrawal chaotic and losses are heavy.

1. Last stand
Guarding the deep ravine that leads to Persepolis, the Persians build a wall and prepare to mount a desperate last stand.

a fiction, and only a handful of frontier provinces remained in the usurper's blood-slick hands. The once glorious Persian Empire, for 220 years the largest in the ancient world, had died by the roadside, humiliated and betrayed.

Taking the capital Persepolis after a last-ditch attempt to hold back the Greeks at a narrow pass called the Persian Gates, the power-drunk Alexander burnt the great palace to the ground in, it is believed, retaliation for the Persian sack of Athens in 480 BCE. Casting the first torch into the building himself, looting and burning spread across the city. Priests were murdered and Persian women forced to marry his soldiers. Zoroastrian prophecy had foretold "demons with dishevelled hair, of the race of wrath" and now, Persia's holy men realised, the demons were here.

As his predecessor Darius had been, Bessus was chased down by the ferocious and dogmatic Alexander into what is now Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Across deserts with little supplies, Alexander rode along his lines, picking up men who fell and lifting their spirits. A charismatic leader even against the backdrop of the bloodiest of campaigns, he had the power to inspire his weary soldiers. Eventually, Bessus' support collapsed. With no army worth a damn, he had been forced to burn crops and stores before the Greek advance in a last-ditch attempt to slow Alexander's terrible pursuit. Fittingly for the betrayer of the last Shahanshah, his own men handed him over to the Greeks. His nose and ears were cut off at Alexander's command, and he was sent back to Persia in chains to be impaled, the Persian punishment for traitors.

This rampage across Persia and her furthest fringes wasn't the first time Alexander's determination had taken on a more murderous hue. In 334 BCE, he had marched his men into the sea up to their chins rather than turn back along the beach, only surviving because the tide began to change direction with the wind, and in 332 BCE this sheer bloody-mindedness joined forces with his ruthlessness at Tyre – the first of many appalling massacres. Refusing to surrender and believing their island fortress was impregnable from land, Alexander laid siege, blockaded the port from the Persian navy and over seven months built a causeway from the mainland to the city – an incredible feat of engineering that allowed his catapults to come within range of the city. Tyre was soon breached, and Alexander's fury fell upon the city's population. Of the 40,000 inhabitants of Tyre, 2,000 were crucified on the beach, 4,000 were killed in the fighting, a handful were pardoned, and over 30,000 sold into slavery.

This act of impossible engineering and bloody vengeance was later repeated in northern India at the Battle of Aornos in 327 BCE, where the crossing of a mountain ravine by improvised wooden bridge – built over seven days and seven nights – was followed by the massacre of the tribal Aśvakas. Welcoming Alexander with open arms, the Greek-speaking Branchidae were set upon when it became known their ancestors had collaborated with the Achaemenids, while other defenders were murdered because they surrendered too late, or been promised safe passage to lure them from behind their walls and into the spears of the Macedonian phalanx.

Like arterial spray on armour, growing accounts of sackings, burnings, enslavement and murder pepper the record of Alexander in gore. It seemed like the further he got from home, the darker his deeds became.

While the rewards of conquest – plunder, wives, riches and glory – had been great, the Greeks were

6. Light cavalry

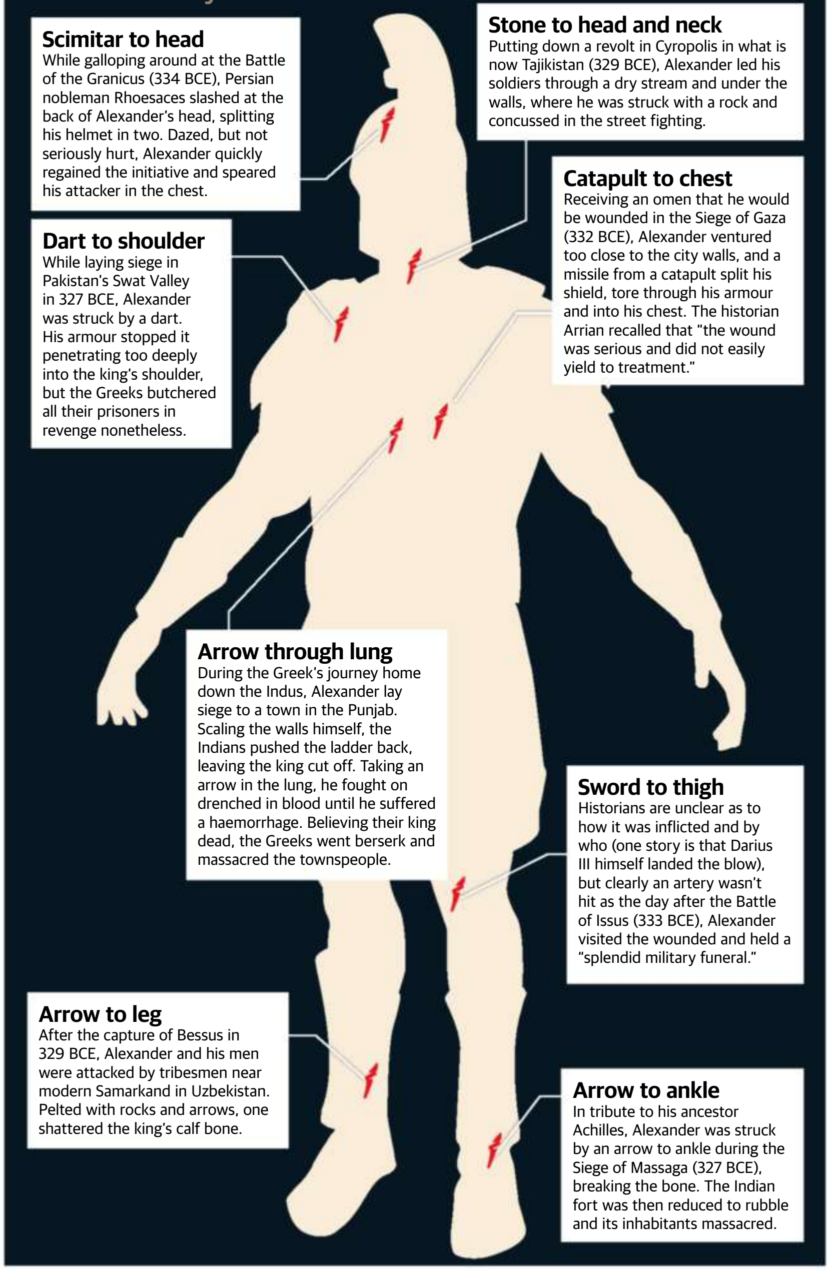
Strengths
Easily replaced, some horse archers.

Weaknesses
Variable equipment and training, light armour of leather or linen.

How did Alexander deploy them?
A combination of lighter armed and armoured cavalry from the other Greek states and local horsemen conscripted in Asia. Deployed dependant on weapons and training, Alexander came to rely on them as the traditional Greek heavy cavalry dwindled.

Alexander's Injuries

The warrior king spent his reign at war and certainly suffered for it…



Scimitar to head
While galloping around at the Battle of the Granicus (334 BCE), Persian nobleman Rhoesaces slashed at the back of Alexander's head, splitting his helmet in two. Dazed, but not seriously hurt, Alexander quickly regained the initiative and speared his attacker in the chest.

Stone to head and neck
Putting down a revolt in Cyropolis in what is now Tajikistan (329 BCE), Alexander led his soldiers through a dry stream and under the walls, where he was struck with a rock and concussed in the street fighting.

Catapult to chest
Receiving an omen that he would be wounded in the Siege of Gaza (332 BCE), Alexander ventured too close to the city walls, and a missile from a catapult split his shield, tore through his armour and into his chest. The historian Arrian recalled that "the wound was serious and did not easily yield to treatment."

Dart to shoulder
While laying siege in Pakistan's Swat Valley in 327 BCE, Alexander was struck by a dart. His armour stopped it penetrating too deeply into the king's shoulder, but the Greeks butchered all their prisoners in revenge nonetheless.

Arrow through lung
During the Greek's journey home down the Indus, Alexander lay siege to a town in the Punjab. Scaling the walls himself, the Indians pushed the ladder back, leaving the king cut off. Taking an arrow in the lung, he fought on drenched in blood until he suffered a haemorrhage. Believing their king dead, the Greeks went berserk and massacred the townspeople.

Sword to thigh
Historians are unclear as to how it was inflicted and by who (one story is that Darius III himself landed the blow), but clearly an artery wasn't hit as the day after the Battle of Issus (333 BCE), Alexander visited the wounded and held a "splendid military funeral."

Arrow to leg
After the capture of Bessus in 329 BCE, Alexander and his men were attacked by tribesmen near modern Samarkand in Uzbekistan. Pelted with rocks and arrows, one shattered the king's calf bone.

Arrow to ankle
In tribute to his ancestor Achilles, Alexander was struck by an arrow to ankle during the Siege of Massaga (327 BCE), breaking the bone. The Indian fort was then reduced to rubble and its inhabitants massacred.

Alexander the Great's army defeat the Greek city state of Thebes, 335 BCE

beginning to tire not just of this endless war that had taken them further and further from home, but Alexander's increasing pretensions. This monarch from Greece's barbarian hinterland had begun to dress in Persian robes, train Persians for the army and insist on courtiers throwing themselves to the ground in the manner of subjects before the Persian king of kings – an affront to the dignity of the Greeks, who took pride in never bowing to their monarchs. On top of that, he now wished to be worshipped as a god.

After one drunken celebration in 328 BCE, this discontent found voice when Cleitus the Black, an old Macedonian general who had served under Philip II and saved Alexander's life in battle, decided he'd had his fill. The general bristled, turned to Alexander, and told him that he would be nothing without the accomplishments of Philip, and all that he now possessed was earned by the blood and sacrifice of Macedonians. Alexander, more petulant than entirely regal in his fury, threw an apple at the general's head, called for his guards and then for a dagger or spear, but wary of escalation, those present quickly began bustling Cleitus from the room and tried to calm their monarch. Either Cleitus wasn't fully removed or then returned, but having clearly passed the point of no return, continued to vent his spleen, until Alexander, finally grabbing hold of a javelin, threw it clean through the old warhorse's heart.

Cleitus was one of the first to challenge the king, but he wasn't the last. In 327 BCE, a plot against him was betrayed, and the conspirators – his own royal pages – stoned to death. Then, later that year he struck another body blow against his traditional supporters. Callisthenes, grand-nephew of Alexander's tutor Aristotle and one of the many historians in Alexander's retinue, had become increasingly critical of his delusions of grandeur, and taunted him with a line from his beloved Iliad: "A better man than you by far was Patroclus, and still death did not escape him." In short – you're no god, and you'll die just like the rest of us. Alexander accused Callisthenes of collusion in the pages' conspiracy, and had him put to death.

It was the beginning of the end. Convinced he was a god, it would be the needs of men that would bring the conquests of Alexander to heel. Adamant that they were at the edge of the world and expecting to see the great sea that the Ancient Greeks believed ringed their continent from which they could return home, Alexander pushed his increasingly mutinous army into India. Confronted with valley after valley of new lands to conquer and battles to wage, they drove on – winning a costly victory against 200 war elephants fielded by King Porus on the banks of the Indus River. Battered and broken after 22,000 kilometres and eight years, monsoon season arrived and drenched the army in water and disease. Rumours also reached the camp that India was a bigger than they had previously heard, and contained armies even greater than that of Porus.

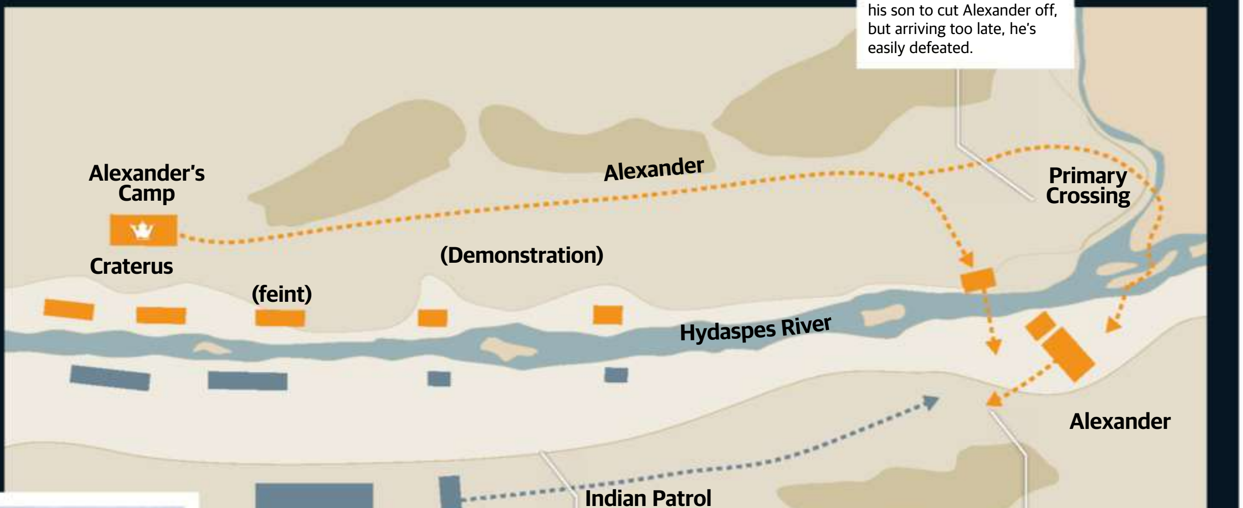
Alexander's generals, mindful of the fate that had befallen other critics of their king, approached cautiously and appealed to his nobility. Coenus – one of Alexander's most trusted commanders – implored him to let them return home to their families, saying so eloquently, "We have achieved

Battle Of The Hydaspes (326 BCE)

Alexander's battle for the Punjab opens up India to the Greeks

Despite leaving him with 1,000 Greek dead, Alexander was eventually able to overcome the numerically superior force and deadly war elephants of King Porus. He managed to do this by using a classic pincer movement and refusal to bow down to nature – in this case, the fast-moving waters of the Hydaspes River.

Porus' defeat left the Punjab region of northern India open to the Greek invaders, but the death toll would add to rumblings of mutiny in Alexander's ranks.

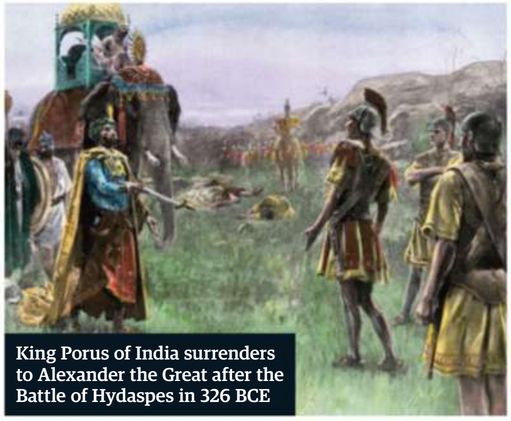


1. Natural defence
King Porus assembles his army on the banks of the monsoon-swollen Hydaspes river to prevent Alexander's crossing.

2. Secret crossing
Alexander secretly leads a small detachment up river to cross via a small island. Porus sends a force led by his son to cut Alexander off, but arriving too late, he's easily defeated.

3. War elephants
Porus wheels his vast army around to confront Alexander head on with four times Alexander's forces and terrifying war elephants.

4. Pincer attack
Alexander sends his light cavalry round the rear, while he leads his heavy cavalry into the weakest part of the Indian line. With an attack on two sides and peppered with arrows, the war elephants panic and cause carnage.


King Porus of India surrenders to Alexander the Great after the Battle of Hydaspes in 326 BCE

> "Even with his dreams of ceaseless conquest doused like campfires before battle, Alexander fought fiercely"

so many marvellous successes, but isn't it time to set some limit? Surely you can see yourself how few are left of the original army that began this enterprise… Sire," he concluded, "the sign of a great man is knowing when to stop."

Reluctantly, the warrior king agreed. Building a temple to Dionysus on the riverbank and leaving the inscription 'Alexander stopped here', they built a fleet of flat-bottom ships and began a long voyage home. Alexander the Great's conquest began with Homer's Iliad as its guide – a tale of triumph and conquest – and ended with the Odyssey – a desperate voyage home.

There were more battles, tragedies and triumphs to come, and many would never see home thanks to the long-running battles with the Indian kingdoms they passed through on their way down the Indus River toward the Arabian Sea, from where they could sail to Persia's southern coast. One battle in early 325 BCE against the Malhi people of Punjab nearly cost Alexander his life as a siege ladder collapsed behind him, leaving him stranded on enemy ramparts, with his bodyguard panicking below. Even with his dreams of ceaseless conquest doused like campfires before battle, Alexander fought fiercely until an arrow pierced his lung, his chroniclers describing air escaping with the blood. Even with all Alexander had subjected them to, his army remained devoted to their monarch – believing him dead, they rampaged through the city, looting, killing and burning in retaliation. Patched up by his doctor, gaunt and unsteady, Alexander had to be sailed past his army while lined up on the riverbank before they would accept he was still alive.

With one force exploring the Persian Gulf, Alexander led the remnants of his army through what is now the Balochistan province of Iran – a sparsely populated landscape of arid mountains and desert. His men died in their hundreds, gasping for water, stumbling through the baking sands in their tattered sandals and blinking into the brilliant sun. By 324 BCE they had reached the Persian city of Susa, but back in the heart of the empire he had stolen, his trials continued – his childhood friend, stalwart general and, some historians have implied, lover Hephaestion died, and then in August the Macedonians in his army mutinied. The Macedonians he placated, but the grief he felt at the loss of "the friend I value with my own life" could not be so easily put right.

While his father died with dreams of a Persian conquest upon his lips, Alexander succumbed to a fever in 323 BCE with greater dreams still. Before his eyes poured the spears of the phalanx south into Arabia and west into Carthage and Rome. "Who shall lead us?" his followers whispered to their dying king. "The strongest," he replied, and with his passing the great empire splintered.

In his tactical genius, charismatic leadership, enduring legacy and fanatical drive, Alexander was far removed from those around him. Perhaps in his view, 'elevated' above those around him, he was so far removed as to be incomparable. He was never defeated in battle, partly because of his skill, leadership and army, but also because he was prepared to pay a toll in human lives.

Tales of the Greek gods endure not just because they present an ideal of heroism and greatness, but because they were flawed beings – a soap opera on a cosmic scale. Like the squabbling deities of Mount Olympus, Alexander the Great was violent, vain, petty and cynical, and like them he overcame impossible odds and accomplished breathtaking feats through ingenuity, charisma, martial prowess and force of will. His example were venerated by emperors, tactics studied by leaders for over 2,000 years, and in the Middle East, tales of 'Alexander the Cursed's' savagery are still told in the lands he wronged. For good and ill, the shadow he casts is still the stuff of legend.

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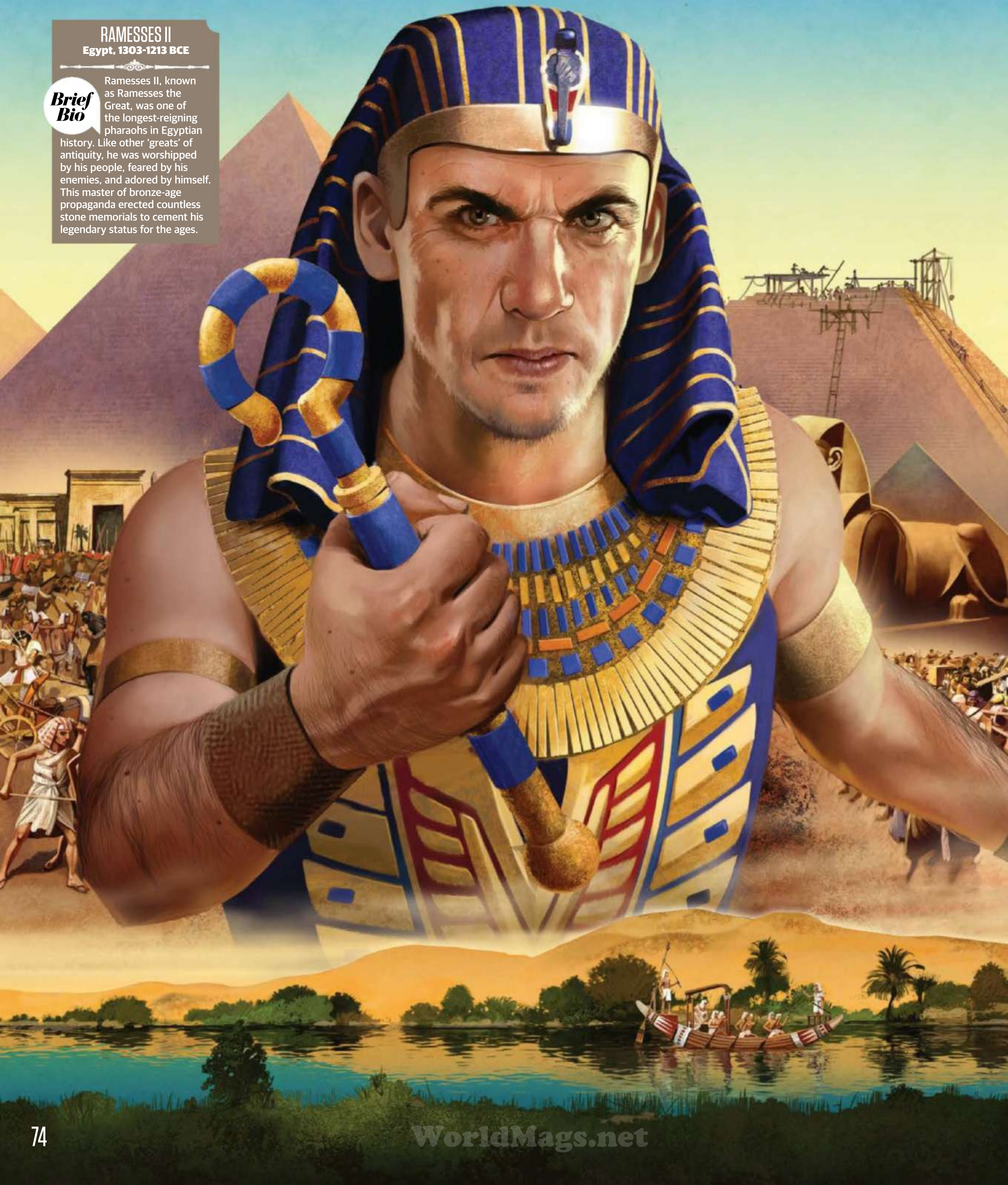
RAMESSES II

Egypt, 1303-1213 BCE

Brief Bio

Ramesses II, known as Ramesses the Great, was one of the longest-reigning pharaohs in Egyptian history. Like other 'greats' of antiquity, he was worshipped by his people, feared by his enemies, and adored by himself. This master of bronze-age propaganda erected countless stone memorials to cement his legendary status for the ages.



Ramesses II

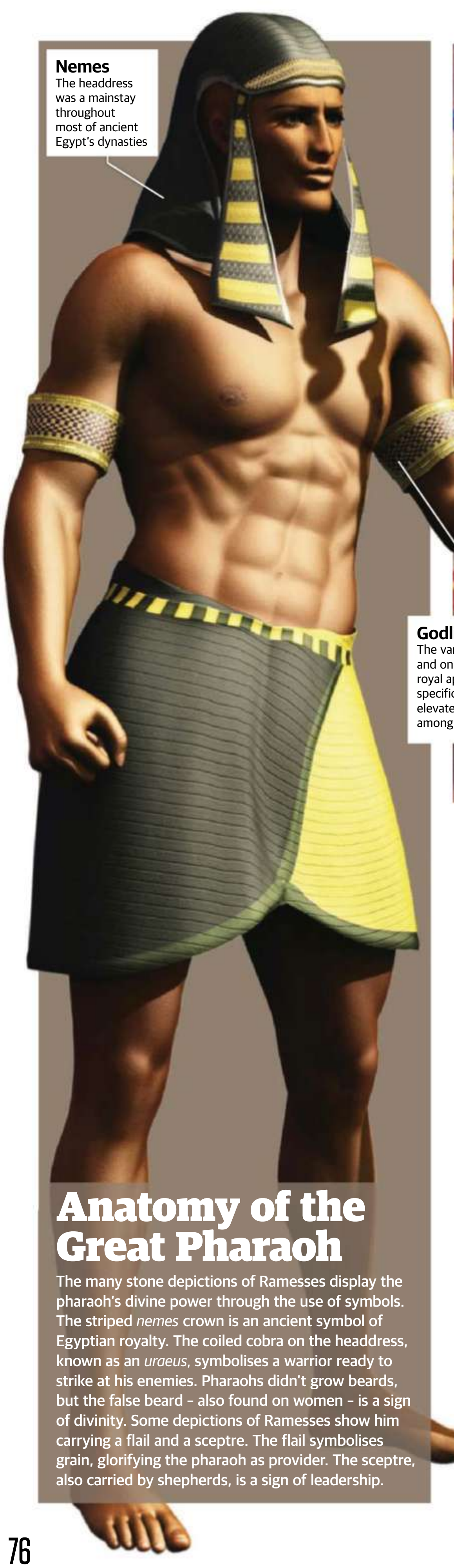
Ramesses the Great earned his fame as a war hero, proud father of 140 children and a shameless self-promoter

The year was 1274 BCE and a god was on the march. Standing six-feet tall with a square jutting jaw, thick lips and a long sharp nose, Ramesses II rode his golden chariot ahead of an army of 20,000 archers, charioteers and sandalled infantrymen. Only five years into his reign as pharaoh, he had already established himself as a fierce warrior and strategic military commander, the rightful blood heir to the newly established 19th Dynasty and a true spiritual son of the goddess Isis herself. Ramesses' soldiers would have seen their commander-in-chief as the rest of Egypt did: as a god in the flesh, possessed of legendary strength and bravery, incapable of error and on a divine mission to re-establish Egypt as the dominant superpower of the Middle East.

Ramesses' destination was Kadesh, a heavily fortified Syrian city in the Orontes River valley. Kadesh was an important centre of trade and commerce and the de facto capital of the Amurru kingdom, a highly coveted piece of land sandwiched on the border between the Egyptian and Hittite empires. As a boy, Ramesses had ridden alongside his father Seti I when the elder Egyptian king finally wrested Kadesh from the Hittites after more than half a century of abortive attempts. But as soon as Seti returned victorious to Egypt, the scheming rulers of Kadesh re-pledged their allegiance to the Hittites. Ramesses had returned to Syria to salvage two tarnished reputations: his father's and that of his empire.

Ramesses and his army had been marching for a month. They departed from the pharaoh's royal residence along the eastern edge of the lush Nile Delta in April, cutting across the Sinai peninsula, following the curve of the Mediterranean coastline up through Canaan, past the strategic highland outpost of Meggido, into the fertile valleys of Lebanon and finally arriving in the forests outside Kadesh. The pharaoh's scouts fanned out to assess the enemy's preparations for battle. The locals painted a deceptively favourable picture. The Hittite king Muwatalli was so afraid of the great Ramesses and his legendary charioteers that the Hittite army was biding its time a hundred miles away.

Ramesses had been living the life of a god for so long that perhaps he believed a little too much in his own divine intimidation. While still an infant, his grandfather helped forge a revolutionary new dynasty in Egypt, one based on military might and absolute royal authority. Ramesses' grandfather was born Paramessu, a foot soldier who had worked his way up to general in the Egyptian army. He found favour with Horemheb, another lifelong military man who had become pharaoh after the untimely death of the teenage king we know



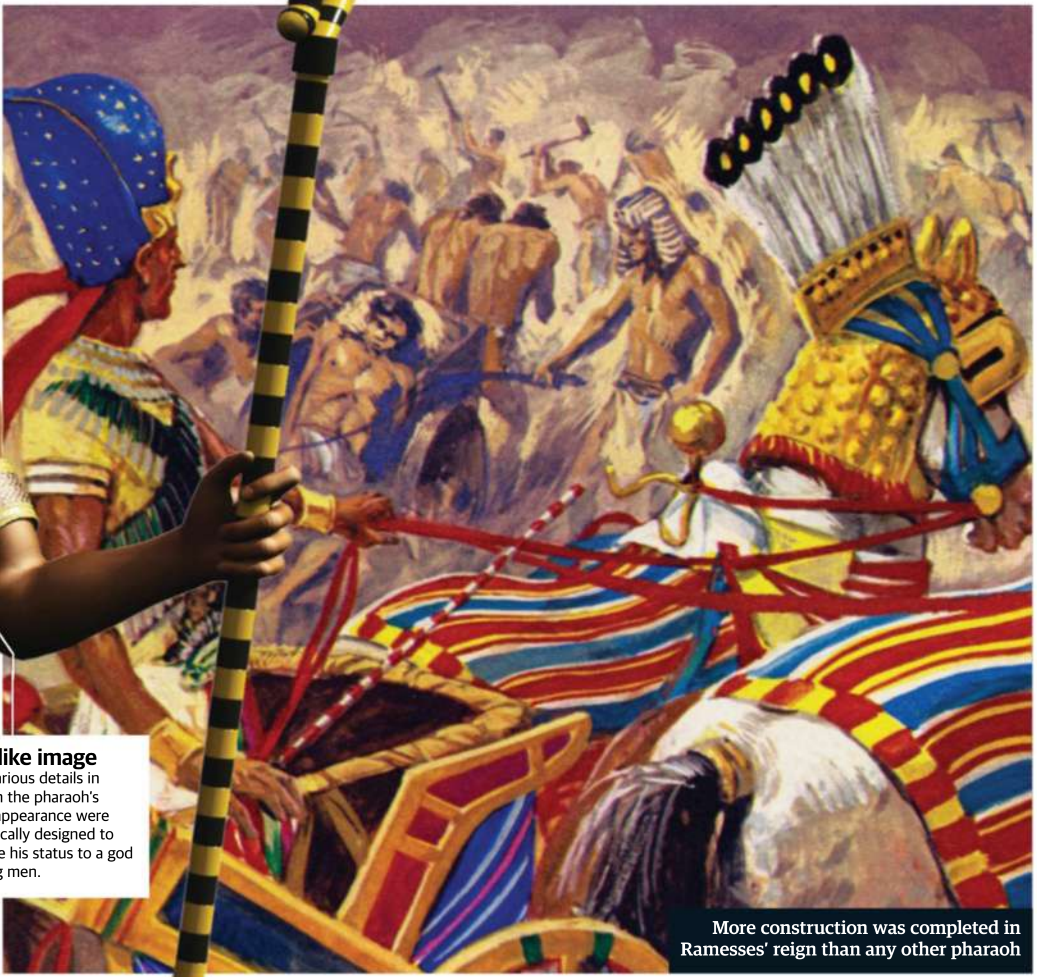
Nemes
The headdress was a mainstay throughout most of ancient Egypt's dynasties

Godlike image
The various details in and on the pharaoh's royal appearance were specifically designed to elevate his status to a god among men.

Sceptre
In Egyptian society the sceptre was a sign of leadership

Anatomy of the Great Pharaoh

The many stone depictions of Ramesses display the pharaoh's divine power through the use of symbols. The striped *nemes* crown is an ancient symbol of Egyptian royalty. The coiled cobra on the headdress, known as an *uraeus*, symbolises a warrior ready to strike at his enemies. Pharaohs didn't grow beards, but the false beard – also found on women – is a sign of divinity. Some depictions of Ramesses show him carrying a flail and a sceptre. The flail symbolises grain, glorifying the pharaoh as provider. The sceptre, also carried by shepherds, is a sign of leadership.



More construction was completed in Ramesses' reign than any other pharaoh

about today thanks to the discovery of his tomb, Tutankhamun.

Horemheb, who had no sons of his own, saw a disciple in Paramessu, someone who would carry on his aggressive campaign of brutal subjugation of rebellious tribes in Nubia, Libya and distant Syria in the name of strengthening the kingdom. When Horemheb died, Paramessu ascended the throne and changed his name to 'Ramessu beloved of Amun,' the man history knows as Ramesses I.

From birth, Ramesses II was groomed to be pharaoh. His father Seti I actually inherited the throne 18 months after Ramesses I became king and his son was raised in the lavish royal palaces of the pharaohs, waited upon by nurses and handmaids and trained by tutors in writing, poetry, art and, most importantly, combat. Seti named Ramesses the commander-in-chief of the army when the boy prince was only ten years old. Aged 14 Ramesses began to accompany his father on military campaigns and witnessed the overwhelming power and might of the Egyptian charioteers in combat on more than one occasion.

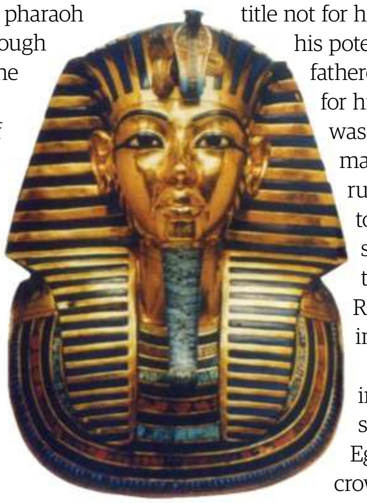
Now he was no longer a boy watching such campaigns but a man – a god – leading them. He was an hour's march from Kadesh and heartened to hear his enemies were rightfully trembling before his godly might. Ramesses ordered his troops to make camp. The royal tents were raised, the horses watered at a gentle tributary of the Orontes, and the soldiers circled the chariots as a half-hearted barricade against the unlikely possibility of attack. In reality, an attack was not only likely, it was imminent. It turned out the locals rounded up by the Egyptian scouts were planted by the Hittites. King Muwatalli and his large force of Hittite charioteers, archers and infantrymen were camped on the far side of Kadesh, hidden from view in the river valley. Luckily for Ramesses, a second wave of Egyptian scouts captured a pair of Hittite spies and beat the truth out of them. Muwatalli was planning an ambush. The target wasn't Ramesses' camp, but the legions of unsuspecting Egyptian infantrymen still marching.

Ramesses dispatched his speediest messengers to warn the approaching troops, but it was too late. Thousands of Hittite charioteers descended in a dust cloud of chaos upon the unprotected infantry. The Hittites rode three to a chariot: one driver, one archer, and one spear-wielding warrior to cut down foot soldiers at close range. They wore ankle-length chain-mail armour while the Egyptians infantry were naked to the curved blades of the Hittite scimitars. The heavy chariots ploughed through the Egyptian ranks, littering the hillside with corpses and sending the survivors fleeing for Ramesses' makeshift camp.

What happened next says more about Ramesses II than perhaps any other event in his long reign as pharaoh. The Hittite forces pursued the decimated Egyptian army all the way to Ramesses' camp, crashing easily through the porous Egyptian defences and battling their way toward the royal tents themselves. Then, according to a first-hand account known as the *Poem of Pentaur*, Ramesses emerged from his tent and single-handedly faced down the enemy hordes: "Then His Majesty appeared in glory like his father Mont, he assumed the accoutrements of battle, and girded himself with his corslet, he was like Ba'al in his hour."

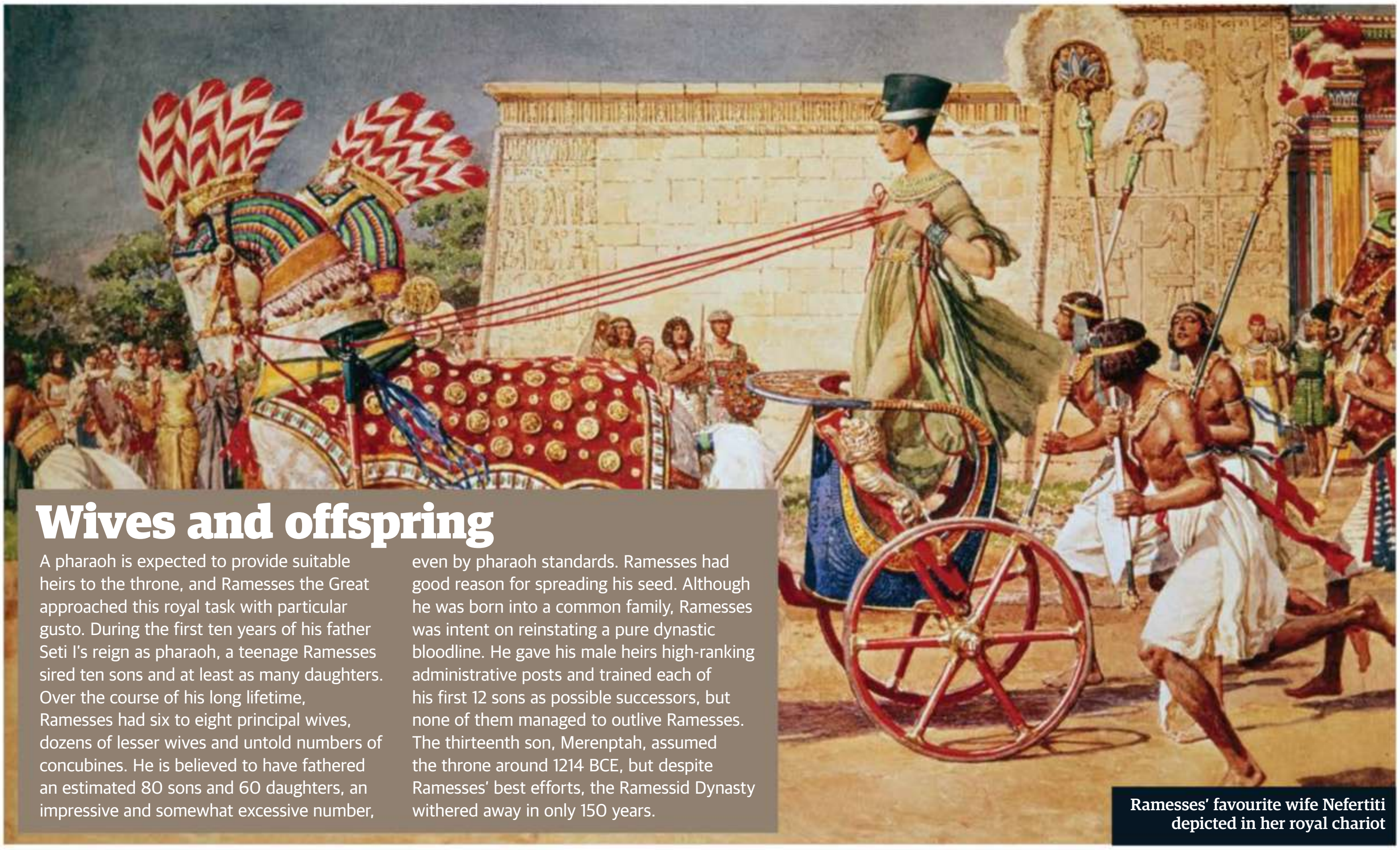
This was the moment, with the Hittite hordes descending upon him, that history witnessed the birth of Ramesses the Great. The pharaoh took to his chariot and sliced through the Hittite ranks, cutting down the foe with his bow while rallying his troops to battle. The image of Ramesses on his golden chariot – his bow drawn back in deadly fury, his wheels rolling over the crushed bodies of his enemies – is carved into the walls of more Egyptian temples than any story in the empire's 3,000-year history. If you believe the *Poem of Pentaur*, which adorns the walls of temples at Luxor, Karnak, Abu Simbel and more, then King Muwatalli was so cowered by Ramesses' superhuman strength that he immediately petitioned for surrender.

But is that really how the Battle of Kadesh went down? Do historians believe the account of the *Poem of Pentaur*, that a single man defeated an entire Hittite army? Hardly. Ramesses the Great, most Egyptologists now believe, deserves his title not for his heroics on the battlefield or his potency as a patriarch – he allegedly fathered well over 100 children – but for his flair for propaganda. Ramesses was, quite literally, the greatest image-maker of antiquity. Those visiting the ruins of the great Egyptian temples today are sure to find a seated stone statue of Ramesses II guarding the gate, or a series of identical Ramesses sculptures supporting interior pillars.



His colossal and unblemished image stood tall and would remain so for centuries. To everyday Egyptians staring up at that massive crowned head, they would have no choice but to believe the statue's unspoken message: here stands your king, your ruler, your god. Their ruler was pharaoh of Egypt for a staggering 66 years. Only one other pharaoh in the 3,000-year history of ancient Egypt sat longer as king than Ramesses the Great. His reign spanned several lifetimes for the average Egyptian, reinforcing his idea that his rule really was eternal. The sheer length of his reign largely accounts for the grand scale of his construction projects and the ubiquity of his image. The ancient pharaoh Khufu was only king for 23 years (2551-2528 BCE) and he built the Great Pyramid at Giza. Imagine what Ramesses accomplished in 66.

"The heavy chariots ploughed through the Egyptian ranks, littering the hillside with corpses"



Ramesses' favourite wife Nefertiti depicted in her royal chariot

Wives and offspring

A pharaoh is expected to provide suitable heirs to the throne, and Ramesses the Great approached this royal task with particular gusto. During the first ten years of his father Seti I's reign as pharaoh, a teenage Ramesses sired ten sons and at least as many daughters. Over the course of his long lifetime, Ramesses had six to eight principal wives, dozens of lesser wives and untold numbers of concubines. He is believed to have fathered an estimated 80 sons and 60 daughters, an impressive and somewhat excessive number, even by pharaoh standards. Ramesses had good reason for spreading his seed. Although he was born into a common family, Ramesses was intent on reinstating a pure dynastic bloodline. He gave his male heirs high-ranking administrative posts and trained each of his first 12 sons as possible successors, but none of them managed to outlive Ramesses. The thirteenth son, Merenptah, assumed the throne around 1214 BCE, but despite Ramesses' best efforts, the Ramessid Dynasty withered away in only 150 years.

Great constructions

Abu Simbel

1264 or 1244 BCE

These two temples along the banks of the Nile are outsized paeans to Ramesses and Nefertari. Both temples are carved into a sheer rock face. The smaller features two 12m (40ft) statues of Nefertari flanked by four even larger colossi of Ramesses. Standing guard outside the big temple are four goliath seated statues of Ramesses, each nearly 21m (70ft) tall. Deep inside the larger temple – which places Ramesses II on equal footing with the gods – a ray of sunlight pierces twice a year: once on Ramesses' birthday.

Per-Ramesses

(or Piramesse)

1280 BCE

Ramesses II built this sprawling complex along the northeastern Nile Delta as the royal seat of the Ramessid Dynasty. The site originally held a modest summer palace constructed by Ramesses' father, Seti I, but the great pharaoh gave it the supersize treatment, adding more than 10km^2 (4mi^2) of mansions, social halls, military barracks and an enormous, opulently tiled throne room, which was fittingly dedicated to the great pharaoh, Ramesses himself.

Ramesseum

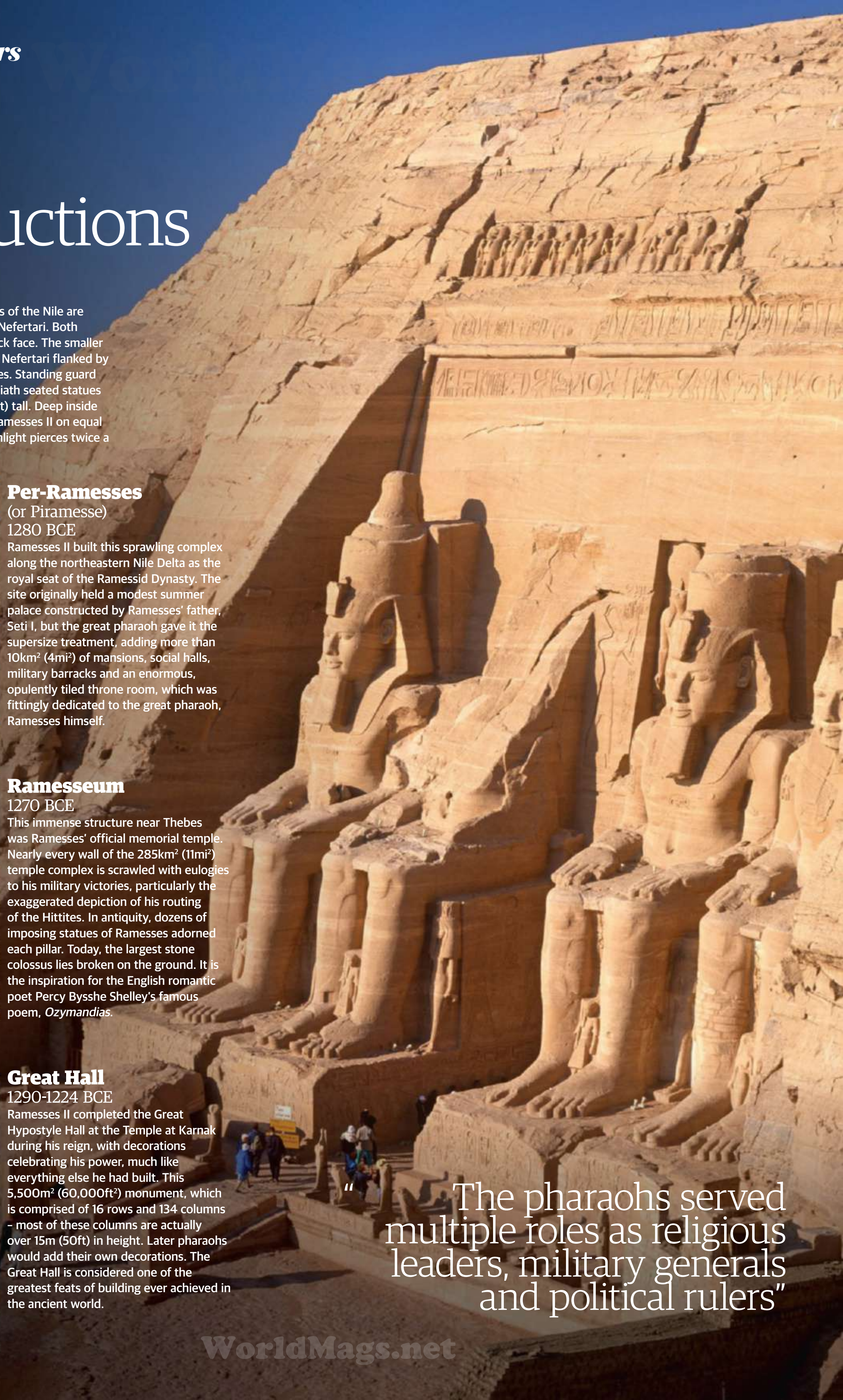
1270 BCE

This immense structure near Thebes was Ramesses' official memorial temple. Nearly every wall of the 285km^2 (11mi^2) temple complex is scrawled with eulogies to his military victories, particularly the exaggerated depiction of his routing of the Hittites. In antiquity, dozens of imposing statues of Ramesses adorned each pillar. Today, the largest stone colossus lies broken on the ground. It is the inspiration for the English romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous poem, *Ozymandias*.

Great Hall

1290-1224 BCE

Ramesses II completed the Great Hypostyle Hall at the Temple at Karnak during his reign, with decorations celebrating his power, much like everything else he had built. This 5,500m^2 (60,000ft^2) monument, which is comprised of 16 rows and 134 columns – most of these columns are actually over 15m (50ft) in height. Later pharaohs would add their own decorations. The Great Hall is considered one of the greatest feats of building ever achieved in the ancient world.



> "The pharaohs served multiple roles as religious leaders, military generals and political rulers"

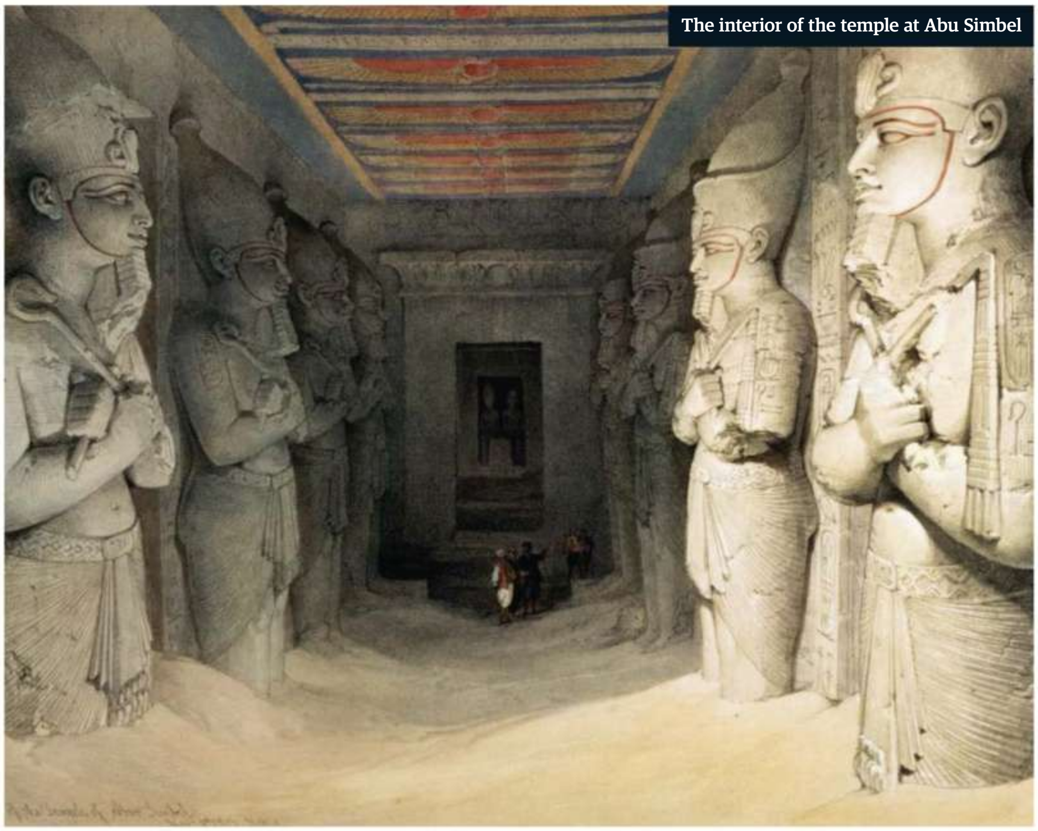
To understand the impressive scope of Ramesses' architectural vision, we only have to look to the royal city that bore his name, Per-Ramesses, or Piramesse. Located 120 kilometres (75 miles) from modern-day Cairo, Piramesse began as a humble summer palace built by Ramesses' father Seti I near the family's ancestral home on the eastern edge of the Nile Delta. Over the course of 18 years of construction and expansion, Piramesse became the third-largest religious centre of Egypt – next to Memphis and Thebes – and the political capital of the entire empire.

Very little of Piramesse's grandeur remains today, but first-hand accounts describe a city of incomparable beauty and wealth. The Royal Quarter sat on a hill overlooking the Nile. Streets were lined with royal residences and temples, ten square kilometres (four square miles) of towering columns, expansive courtyards and stairways encrusted with multicoloured tile work. The empire's wealthiest families, government officials and high priests lived in surrounding villas connected by canals and lush water gardens. The farmland encircling the city was some of the most fertile and productive in the region, supplying Piramesse with ample grain, fruits and vegetables to feed its 30,000 citizens and fill the pharaoh's ample storehouses.

Piramesse was also a striking, cosmopolitan capitol. Ramesses likely chose the city's location for its proximity to the fortress at Sile, the traditional gateway to the eastern provinces of Palestine, Syria and the Asiatic empires beyond. Foreign diplomats, traders and migrant labourers arrived at the newly built capital in droves. In addition to the traditional Egyptian temples built to Seth and Amun, there were foreign cults dedicated to Ba'al, Anat and the Syrian goddess Astarte, whom the pharaoh adopted as the patron deity of his chariot horses. Piramesse may have been the 'Ramses' of the Old Testament, where Hebrew slaves were put to work on the pharaoh's great storehouses. Whether Ramesses himself was indeed the wicked pharaoh of *The Ten Commandments* fame is another matter.

Importantly, the pharaohs of ancient Egypt were more than mere figureheads: they served multiple roles as religious leaders, military generals and political rulers. The pharaoh's ultimate responsibility was to lead the empire toward *ma'at*, the ideal state of cosmic harmony, justice, order and peace. The Egyptians were skilled astronomers and charted the orderly and predictable movements of celestial bodies, each connected with a god or goddess. The goal of individual human beings and Egyptian society as a whole was to reflect the divine harmony of the heavens on Earth. The pharaoh, through his legal, religious and military roles, exerted the greatest influence of all.

In that sense, Ramesses was indeed a great pharaoh. The Egyptian empire enjoyed a prolonged period of stability and *ma'at* under his watch. For all of his posturing as a superhuman warrior who crushed his enemies by the hundreds of thousands, Ramesses was in fact a savvy military and political strategist. The historically dubious *Poem of Pentaur*



The interior of the temple at Abu Simbel

His glorious rule

1303 BCE

Born into greatness
Ramesses II didn't come from royal blood – his grandfather Ramesses I was a military hero who won the favour of the heirless Horemheb – but his birth coincided with Egypt's rise to increased military and political power.
1303 BCE

The boy who would be king
Ramesses II was a young boy when his father Seti I became pharaoh. Inside Seti I's impressive temple at Abdju, a colourful wall relief depicts the young Prince Ramesses holding a scroll upon which is written an unbroken royal lineage dating back to Menes, the first pharaoh who united Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom. Egyptologists argue that Ramesses was likely only one of several possible successors to the throne, but the official history claims it as his sole birthright.
1300 BCE

Child-in-chief
At only ten years old, Ramesses was appointed as commander-in-chief of the army. Four years later, he accompanied Seti on several military campaigns in Libya and Palestine.
1299 BCE

Marriage to Nefertari
Nefertari was the first and best-known wife of Ramesses the Great. He married her while still a prince and she bore him four children before he ascended to the throne. Nefertari was from a prominent Egyptian family, the daughter of a high official and the sister of the mayor of Thebes. Ramesses' adoration of Nefertari is recorded in the statuary at the small temple at Abu Simbel and in works of elegiac poetry to his beloved first companion.
1293 BCE

Co-regent
Ramesses was officially named co-ruler of Egypt in Seti's eighth year as pharaoh. Around this time, Ramesses and his two young sons led military campaigns to quash rebellions in Nubia, including an impressive chariot raid.
1283 BCE

Crowned king
At the death of Seti I, Ramesses had firmly established himself as a capable military leader and the rightful heir to the Ramessid throne. Thus began his six-decade reign.
1279 BCE

Construction boom
After Kadesh, Ramesses enjoyed a period of relative peace during which he restored or constructed new temples at Thebes, Memphis, Karnak and Abu Simbel. Next to the pyramid makers, he's the most influential builder in Egyptian antiquity.
1275 BCE

'Victory' at Kadesh
Both the Hittites and the Egyptians laid claim to the Kingdom of Amurru, located on the borderlands between these two superpowers in the 13th century BCE. The conflict came to a head in the historic Battle of Kadesh, one of the largest and best-documented military clashes in antiquity. Both sides claimed victory, but Ramesses was the better propagandist, inscribing his *Poem of Pentaur* – "he is braver than hundreds of thousands combined… not speaking boastfully" – on the walls of five major Egyptian temples.
1274 BCE

Deification
Ramesses celebrated his first *sed* or jubilee festival in the 30th year of his reign when he was approximately 60 years old. The ancient ceremony dates back to the earliest pharaohs and was meant to renew the king's authority and rejuvenate him physically and spiritually. Ramesses celebrated 13 *seds*, each one elevating his spiritual status higher and higher. In a world-view that already considered pharaohs to be born of the gods, Ramesses likely attained full deification in the eyes of his people while still on Earth.
1249 BCE

Everlasting king
Ramesses outlived his 12 oldest sons, reigning until the extraordinary age of 96. His mummy shows signs of severe and degenerative arthritis and a wicked case of smallpox, suggesting his last years were somewhat less than comfortable.
1213 BCE

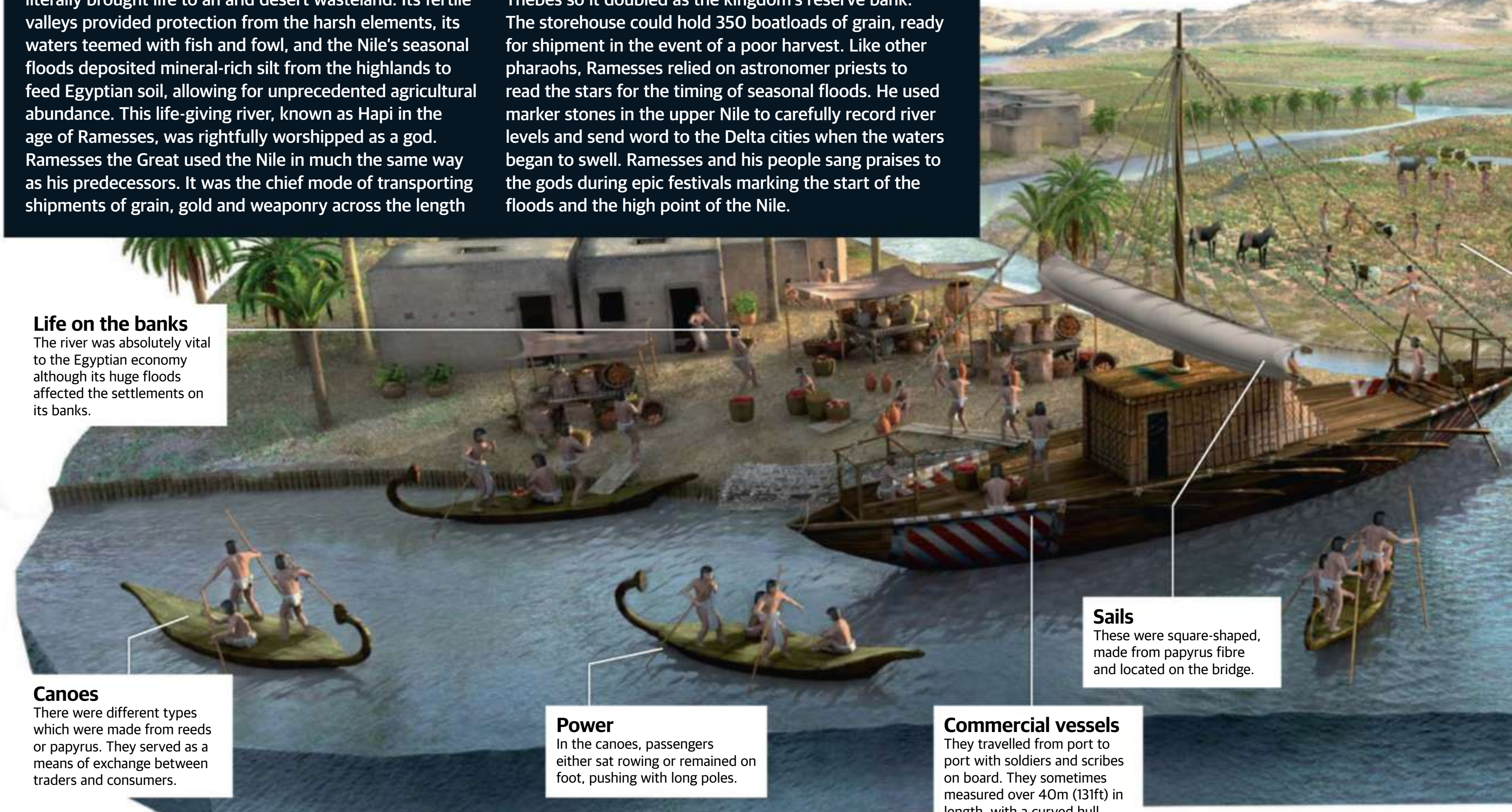
1249 BCE

The Nile: 'Mother of all men'

It's impossible to overestimate the importance of the Nile to the ancient Egyptians. The 7,507-km (4,665-mi) river literally brought life to an arid desert wasteland. Its fertile valleys provided protection from the harsh elements, its waters teemed with fish and fowl, and the Nile's seasonal floods deposited mineral-rich silt from the highlands to feed Egyptian soil, allowing for unprecedented agricultural abundance. This life-giving river, known as Hapi in the age of Ramesses, was rightfully worshipped as a god. Ramesses the Great used the Nile in much the same way as his predecessors. It was the chief mode of transporting shipments of grain, gold and weaponry across the length of the empire. Ramesses placed his mortuary temple, the Ramesseum, along the banks of the upper Nile in Thebes so it doubled as the kingdom's reserve bank. The storehouse could hold 350 boatloads of grain, ready for shipment in the event of a poor harvest. Like other pharaohs, Ramesses relied on astronomer priests to read the stars for the timing of seasonal floods. He used marker stones in the upper Nile to carefully record river levels and send word to the Delta cities when the waters began to swell. Ramesses and his people sang praises to the gods during epic festivals marking the start of the floods and the high point of the Nile.

Backbone

Over the centuries, the Egyptian civilisation gradually settled along the banks of the final 1,300km (808mi) of the Nile. Farms dominated the landscape around its banks, and its waters were the primary means of communication. For daily tasks, small canoes were used; however, for trade or transporting passengers, strong sail boats were employed.



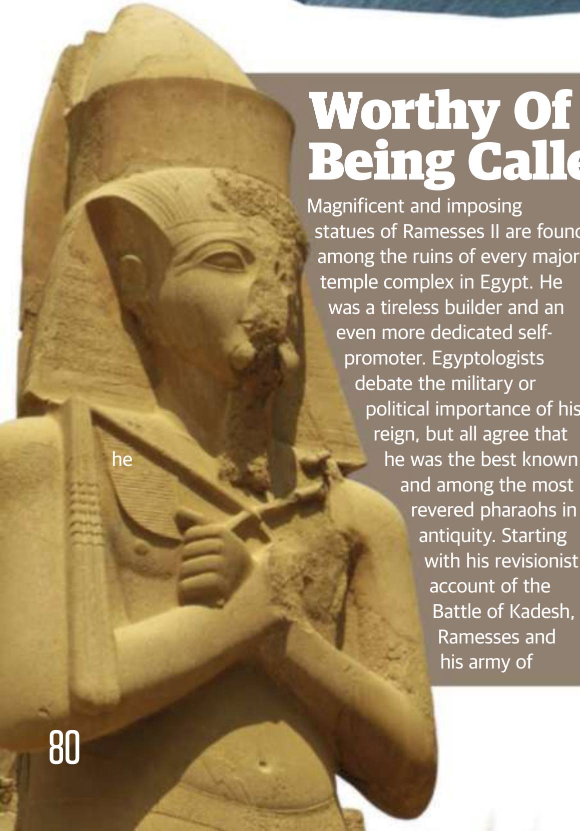
Life on the banks
The river was absolutely vital to the Egyptian economy although its huge floods affected the settlements on its banks.

Sails
These were square-shaped, made from papyrus fibre and located on the bridge.

Canoes
There were different types which were made from reeds or papyrus. They served as a means of exchange between traders and consumers.

Power
In the canoes, passengers either sat rowing or remained on foot, pushing with long poles.

Commercial vessels
They travelled from port to port with soldiers and scribes on board. They sometimes measured over 40m (131ft) in length, with a curved hull and sail.



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Worthy Of Being Called Great'?

Magnificent and imposing statues of Ramesses II are found among the ruins of every major temple complex in Egypt. He was a tireless builder and an even more dedicated self-promoter. Egyptologists debate the military or political importance of his reign, but all agree that he was the best known and among the most revered pharaohs in antiquity. Starting with his revisionist account of the Battle of Kadesh, Ramesses and his army of poets and scribes published his exploits in hieroglyphic glory across the empire. His reign spanned six decades, the second longest in Egyptian history. His longevity, coupled with some lucky timing – his rule coincided with the golden age of Egyptian power, culture and material abundance – gave him plenty of time to brag and plenty of material to brag about. During his lifetime, Ramesses constructed dozens of temples and castle complexes, and celebrated his god-like achievements through self-dedicated festivals. He placed his own image alongside the highest gods in the Egyptian pantheon and the people worshiped him thusly. Did he deserve such reverence? The real truth is lost to history. The only portrait we have of Ramesses is the one drawn by the pharaoh himself: that of a war hero, potent patriarch and a god among men. This is the same persona imposed upon centuries of Egyptians who stared up at his immense stone images and awed at the power of Ramesses the Great.

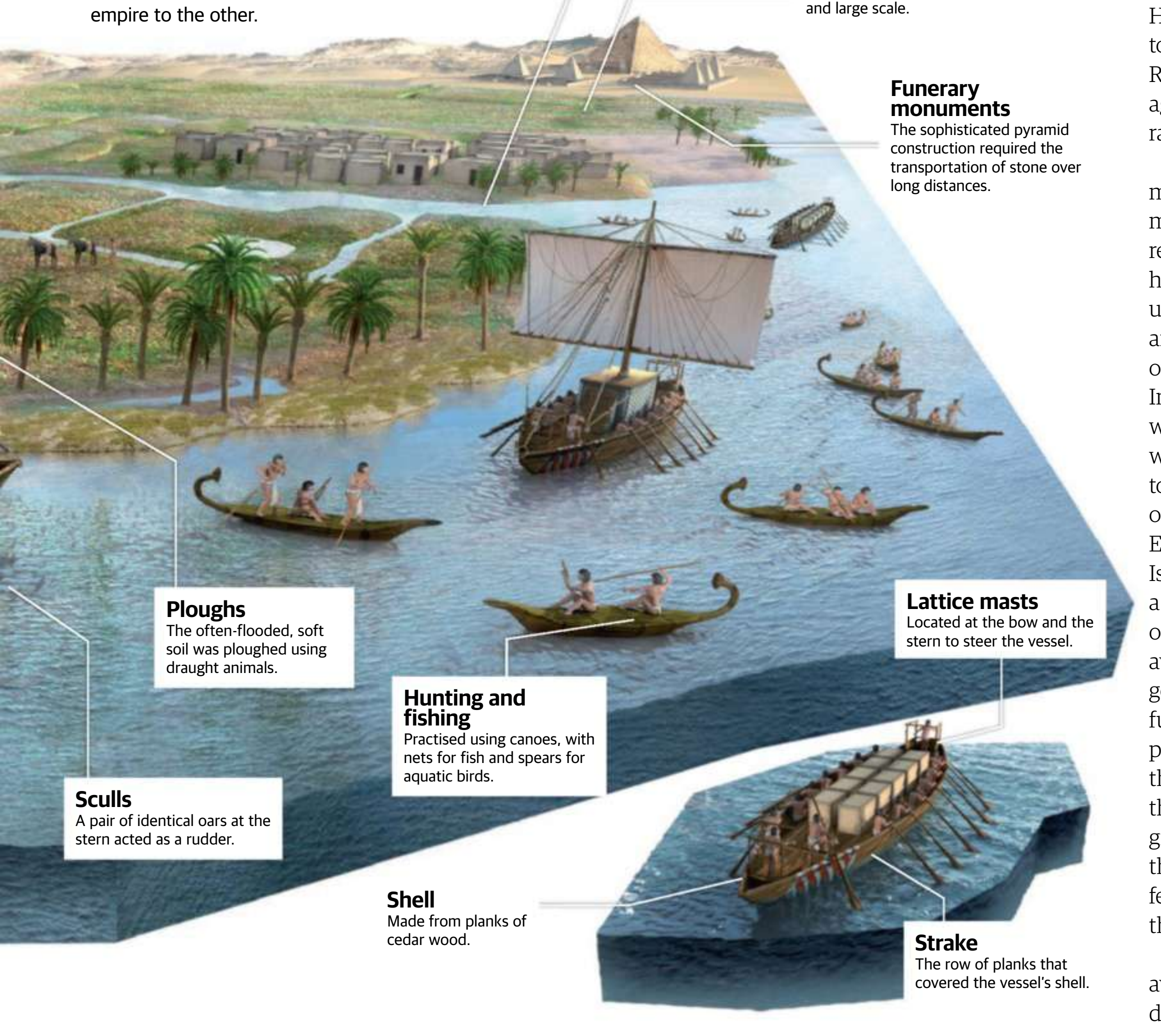
is not the only document of Ramesses' greatness. Hanging in the hallways of the United Nations building in New York City is a clay replica of the world's first peace treaty, signed in 1269 BCE by the Hittite King Hattusillis III and Egypt's very own Ramesses II. Was this the peace treaty the Hittites begged Ramesses to sign after his brutal show of strength during the Battle of Kadesh? Not at all.

The true outcome of the Battle of Kadesh was a blood-soaked stalemate. Ramesses was saved from the Hittite chariot ambush by the arrival of reinforcements from the sea. The Egyptians pushed the Hittites back across the Orontes, but both sides lost so many men in the slaughter that both kings lost their appetite for the main event. Ramesses returned to Egypt with nothing to show for a months-long military campaign.

A decade later, and the pharaoh once again looked to prove his power by driving his forces to the north to test the strength of Amurru and Kadesh. This time, the Hittite King Muwatalli was

Nile – a hub of transportation

The River Nile was the link between the various Egyptian cities, from the Second Cataracts of Lower Nubia to the Mediterranean Sea. A whole host of vessels travelled the river, transporting people and goods from one side of the empire to the other.



Canals
These distributed the water during swells of the Nile to fertilize the fields.

Cropland
Wheat and barley were produced in the irrigated fields and transported on a small and large scale.

Funerary monuments
The sophisticated pyramid construction required the transportation of stone over long distances.

Ploughs
The often-flooded, soft soil was ploughed using draught animals.

Lattice masts
Located at the bow and the stern to steer the vessel.

Hunting and fishing
Practised using canoes, with nets for fish and spears for aquatic birds.

Sculls
A pair of identical oars at the stern acted as a rudder.

Shell
Made from planks of cedar wood.

Strake
The row of planks that covered the vessel's shell.

> "He saw an opportunity to drop a centuries-old-feud that cost Egyptian lives and resources"

dead and the Hittite empire was in the throes of a succession crisis. Ramesses easily took the city and claimed Amurru for Egypt. Expecting a full-scale reprisal by the Hittites, Ramesses was instead greeted by a cadre of Hittite diplomats. The new King Hattusillis had more to worry about than an Egyptian pharaoh with an old vendetta. The Assyrians to the east had amassed wealth and political might that threatened to crush any single empire that stood in its way. But together, Hattusillis proposed, the Hittites and Egyptians could defend their sovereignty.

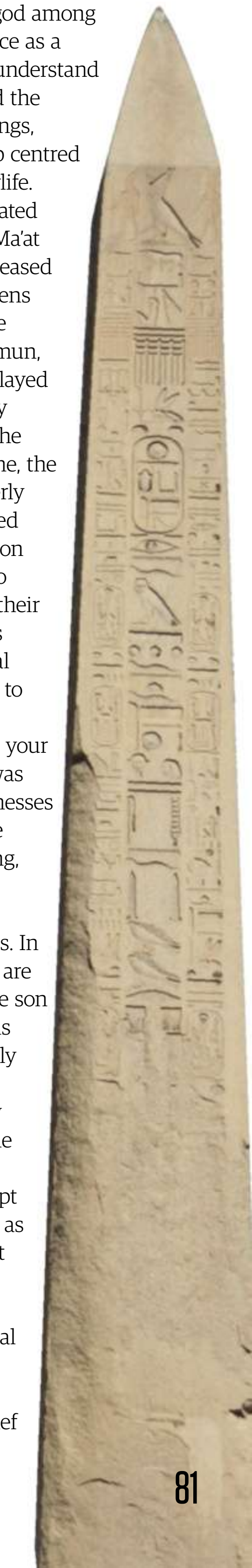
The peace treaty hanging in the UN is a testament to Ramesses' long-term political vision. He could easily have viewed Hattusillis' offer as a sign of weakness and attempted to rout the Hittites once and for all. Instead, he saw an opportunity to drop a centuries-old feud that cost Egyptian lives and resources and engaged in an unprecedented act of diplomacy that would bring peace and stability to the kingdom for generations to come. To seal the newly brokered relationship between the Hittites and Egyptians, Ramesses accepted the gift of one of Hattusillis' daughters as his seventh principal wife.

Back in Piramesse, the royal capital, the new Hittite allies proved invaluable to the strengthening of the Egyptian armed forces. The capital city was more than a showcase for the prosperity of the empire. It also housed the pharaoh's largest armoury, a massive bronze-smelting factory whose blast furnace provided the swords, spears and arrowheads for Egypt's army. Shortly after the peace treaty was signed, Ramesses imported Hittite craftsmen to instruct the armoury workers in the secrets behind their impervious Hittite shields. The Egyptians may have lost an enemy in the Hittites, but there were plenty of aggressors itching to take their place. Until the very end of his reign, Ramesses vigilantly defended Egypt's borders against threats from Libyan tribal leaders, Assyrian raiders and more.

Ramesses' power was about much more than military might, though; he was a god among men. To understand his significance as a religious leader, it is important to understand how the ancient Egyptians viewed the universe. From its earliest beginnings, ancient Egyptian religious worship centred on a deeply held belief in the afterlife. In fact, the concept of *ma'at* originated with the ostrich-winged goddess Ma'at who 'weighs' the hearts of the deceased to determine their worth. The dozens of other gods and goddesses in the Egyptian pantheon – Ra, Osiris, Amun, Isis, Seth and many more – each played a role within a complex mythology of creation, death and rebirth. To the average Egyptian in Ramesses' time, the gods were responsible for the orderly function of the universe and offered personal protection and guidance on the mysterious journey from life to the afterlife. Egyptians expressed their gratitude and devotion to the gods through the celebration of seasonal festivals and by bringing offerings to the gods' temples.

The pharaoh, of course, was not your average Egyptian. The royal cult was deserving of its own worship. Ramesses was the intermediary between the divine and the human. While living, pharaohs were the sons of Ra, the powerful Sun god. In the afterlife, pharaohs are the offspring of Osiris. In a competing cosmology, pharaohs are the living incarnation of Horus, the son of Isis. In any case, the implications are clear. The pharaoh is the earthly link to an unbroken line of divine authority, stretching from the very creation of the universe itself to the eternities of the afterlife.

The government of ancient Egypt was a theocracy with the pharaoh as absolute monarch. But that doesn't mean that Ramesses personally oversaw each and every aspect of Egyptian civil life. His chief political officers were two *viziers* or prime ministers, one each for Upper and Lower Egypt. Viziers served as chief

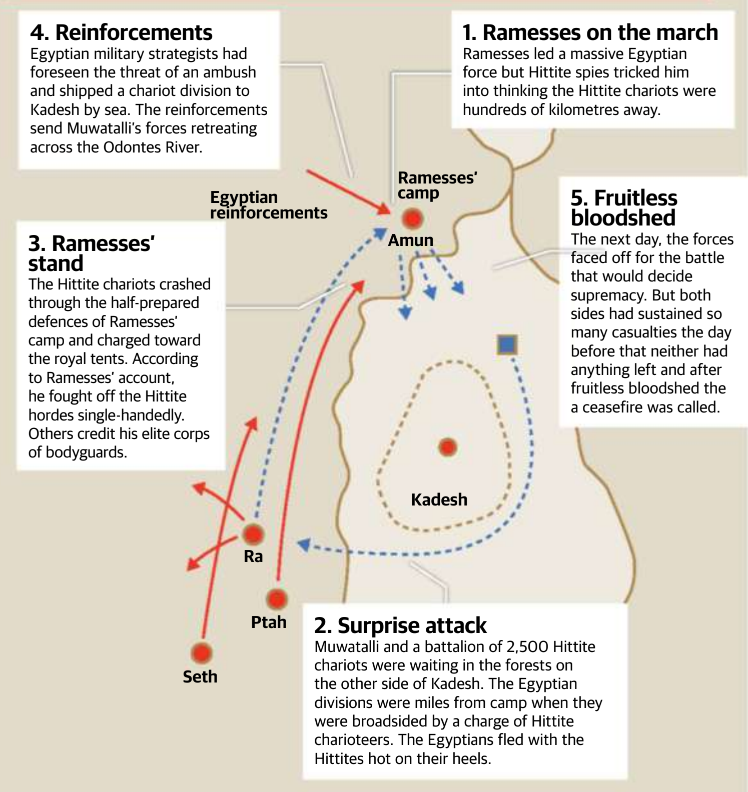


Battle chariots

The Egyptians and Hittites adopted the horse-driven chariot from the Asiatic steppe cultures. Horses weren't mounted in battle but strapped to rolling platforms holding a driver and one or more warriors. Speedy chariots could dash in and out of battle, attacking with a combination of arrows and close-range javelins and spears. The Hittites were famed charioteers, charging en masse with thousands of chariots carrying chain-mailed warriors. Egyptian chariots were lighter, the frames made of wood wrapped in stretched canvas, and the floor made from leather netting.

The battle of Kadesh was history's largest chariot battle

Battle of Kadesh



1. Ramesses on the march
Ramesses led a massive Egyptian force but Hittite spies tricked him into thinking the Hittite chariots were hundreds of kilometres away.

2. Surprise attack
Muwatalli and a battalion of 2,500 Hittite chariots were waiting in the forests on the other side of Kadesh. The Egyptian divisions were miles from camp when they were broadsided by a charge of Hittite charioteers. The Egyptians fled with the Hittites hot on their heels.

3. Ramesses' stand
The Hittite chariots crashed through the half-prepared defences of Ramesses' camp and charged toward the royal tents. According to Ramesses' account, he fought off the Hittite hordes single-handedly. Others credit his elite corps of bodyguards.

4. Reinforcements
Egyptian military strategists had foreseen the threat of an ambush and shipped a chariot division to Kadesh by sea. The reinforcements send Muwatalli's forces retreating across the Odontes River.

5. Fruitless bloodshed
The next day, the forces faced off for the battle that would decide supremacy. But both sides had sustained so many casualties the day before that neither had anything left and after fruitless bloodshed the a ceasefire was called.

> "Ramesses renovated or constructed more temples than any pharaoh in all 30 ancient-Egyptian dynasties"

justices of the Egyptian courts, they collected taxes, managed the grain reserves, settled territorial disputes and kept careful records of Nile river levels and rainfall. Treasurers managed the finances of 'church' and state and ran the stone quarries that built national shrines. If an average Egyptian had a grievance, he would take it up with the local governors in charge of each of Egypt's 42 *nomes* or states. Governors reported to the viziers, who met daily with the pharaoh for counsel.

During his long life, Ramesses renovated or constructed more temples than any pharaoh in all 30 ancient-Egyptian dynasties. He also placed his figure prominently inside each and every one of them, often on equal footing with the gods. At first, this appears to be an unparalleled act of hubris. But seen through the lens of the Egyptian religious mind, this spiritual self-promotion starts to make sense. If the highest goal of Egyptian civilisation is to achieve *ma'at* or divine harmony, then you need a supreme leader whose very will is in absolute harmony with the gods. Through his numerous construction projects, Ramesses proved his devotion to the gods while also nurturing his own thriving cult of personality.

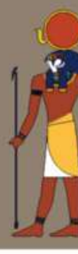
Ramesses built some truly refined and subtle temples, especially his small addition to his father Seti I's monumental temple complex at Abydos. But refined and subtle was not in his nature. For starters, he liked to do things quickly. In traditional temple construction, all decorative motifs on the outside of a temple were hewn using incised relief, in which images and hieroglyphs are carved into the stone to accentuate the contrast of sun and shadow. In the darkened interiors of temples, however, artists used the more time-consuming bas-relief method, in which drawings and symbols are raised relative to the background. In the interest of time, Ramesses ordered all of his temples to be etched in incise relief inside and out. That's one reason why Ramesses built more temples than any king before or since.

Critics of Ramesses' theatrical and self-congratulatory construction style have irrefutable evidence in the two temples at Abu Simbel. Both structures are carved directly into the living rock on a sheer cliff overlooking a switchback curve in the Nubian Nile. Ramesses dropped all pretence of piety with the construction of the larger temple at Abu Simbel, appropriately called the Temple of Ramesses-beloved-of-Amun. Four monumental

Egyptian gods

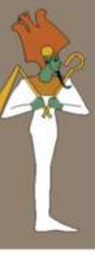
Ra

Ra the Sun god is also the supreme creation god of the Egyptian pantheon. The falcon-headed deity created the Earth, sky and Moon. Pharaohs paid tribute to Ra as his adoptive sons. The cult of Ra was widespread throughout Egypt – promising health and virility – with acolytes thronging the great temple of Ra in Heliopolos.



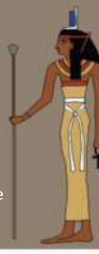
Osiris

The cult of the god Osiris is closely connected with death, but the myth of Osiris is actually a story of resurrection. Osiris was killed by his brother Seth, but the gods favoured him and brought him back to life. In the *Book of the Dead*, Osiris acts as the chief judge of all non-royal Egyptians in the afterlife and weighs their soul.



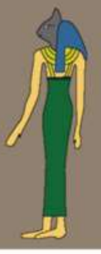
Isis

The most beloved and long-worshipped goddess in ancient Egypt. She was the wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus. Ramesses and other pharaohs were considered incarnations of Horus. The Isis cult was so widespread duringa the Greek and Roman periods that a temple dedicated to the goddess once stood in modern-day London.



Bastet

This major Egyptian goddess had the body of a woman with the head of a cat – in ancient Egypt the cat was a revered animal like no other. Bastet was one of the many daughters of the Sun god Ra and a great temple was built in her honour at Bubastis in the Nile Delta. Originally a goddess of warfare, she later became a gentle protective goddess.



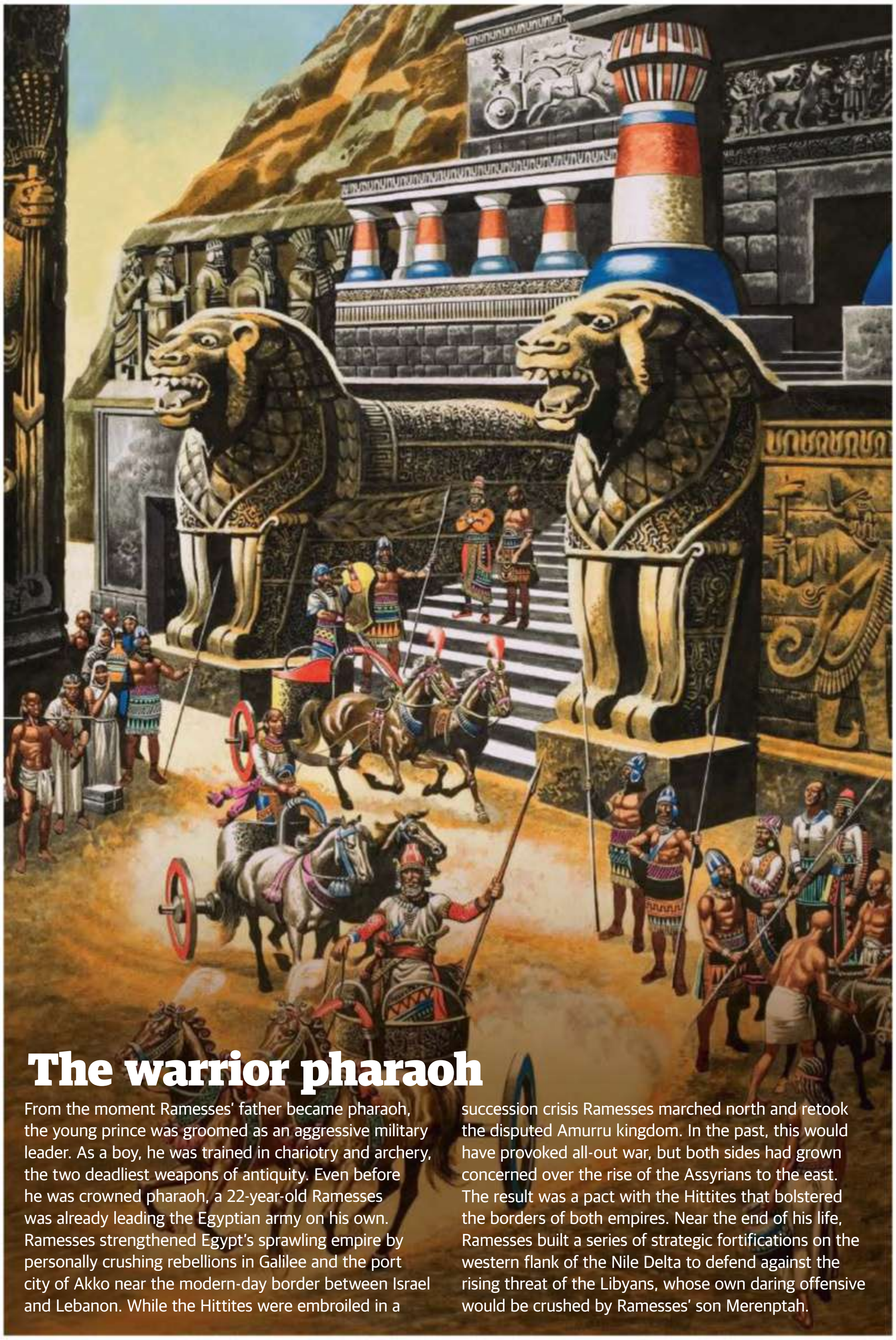
statues of Ramesses – each more than 21 metres (70 feet) tall – guard the entry to the temple. Inside, it's wall-to-wall Ramesses. Every pillar in the great hall is carved with Ramesses in the form of Osiris. Wall reliefs recount Ramesses' heroic military exploits. And deep in the Holy of Holies sit the three most revered creator gods of the Egyptian pantheon – Ptah, Amun and Ra – next to none other than the deified image of Ramesses himself.

In his day, Ramesses was arguably the most powerful man to walk the Earth. He was the divinely ordained ruler of a thriving and cohesive civilization centuries ahead of its time. As pharaoh, he overachieved in every category: crushing foreign enemies, maintaining domestic order and building massive monuments to the gods and his own glorious name. As long as his stoic stone visage crowns the ruins of his magnificent kingdom, the greatness of Ramesses will continue to echo loudly through the ages.

A god among men

From the earliest Egyptian dynasties dating back to 3000 BCE, the king or pharaoh was worshipped alongside the gods as a lesser deity, specifically the Earthly incarnation of Horus, the sky god. In fact, by bringing order and peace to the kingdom, a beneficent pharaoh was re-enacting the divine creation of the Egyptian universe out of chaos. Although pharaohs like Djoser and Khufu rose to near-godlike status during their lifetime through the construction of the great pyramids, it wasn't until the New Kingdom era of Amenhotep III and Ramesses II that pharaohs were officially deified in the flesh.

Amenhotep used the occasion of his *sed* festival to announce his transfiguration from king to god. The *sed* is an ancient royal festival traditionally celebrated during the 30th year of a pharaoh's reign. It's a rejuvenation ceremony held at the pharaoh's memorial temple – a combination of funeral and coronation all at once. Always the overachiever, Ramesses didn't even wait for his first *sed* festival. By the eighth year of his reign, he was ordering the construction of giant statues engraved with the name "Ramesses-the-god." Ramesses went on to place similar deified engravings of himself in the doorways of all of Egypt's major temples, where locals would pay homage to the "god among men" along with the celestial deities like Ra, Osiris and Ptah. In an odd twist, Ramesses is often depicted in reliefs offering sacrifices to his own deified self. In his later years, Ramesses took to celebrating the sed renewal festival every three years, then annually. These provided excellent opportunities to showcase his divine power – through public celebrations of his victories and impressive construction projects – and to solidify his divine authority.

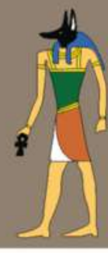


The warrior pharaoh

From the moment Ramesses' father became pharaoh, the young prince was groomed as an aggressive military leader. As a boy, he was trained in chariotry and archery, the two deadliest weapons of antiquity. Even before he was crowned pharaoh, a 22-year-old Ramesses was already leading the Egyptian army on his own. Ramesses strengthened Egypt's sprawling empire by personally crushing rebellions in Galilee and the port city of Akko near the modern-day border between Israel and Lebanon. While the Hittites were embroiled in a succession crisis Ramesses marched north and retook the disputed Amurru kingdom. In the past, this would have provoked all-out war, but both sides had grown concerned over the rise of the Assyrians to the east. The result was a pact with the Hittites that bolstered the borders of both empires. Near the end of his life, Ramesses built a series of strategic fortifications on the western flank of the Nile Delta to defend against the rising threat of the Libyans, whose own daring offensive would be crushed by Ramesses' son Merenptah.

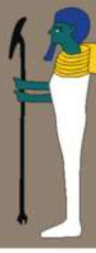
Anubis

This jackal-headed god would hold the scales on which the hearts of dead Egyptians were weighed; if the heart was light enough, Anubis would lead the dead to Osiris (the god of the afterlife) but if it was too heavy, the soul would be destroyed. Anubis was more highly revered than Osiris up until the Middle Kingdom era.



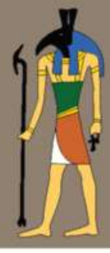
Ptah

Represented as a man in the form of a mummy, Ptah was the god of craftsmen, architects and the demiurge that existed before all things. It was his thought that actually made the world manifest itself and as such he was an extremely important god – a prototypical god of creation and imagination.



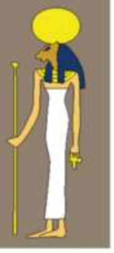
Seth

Composed of various different animals, Seth was the semi-villainous god of storms and chaos. Out of jealously he murdered his brother Osiris and hacked his body into pieces so he could not be resurrected. However, in some of the outlying parts of the Egyptian empire, he was regarded as a heroic chief deity.



Tefnut

Tefnut was strongly associated with both the Moon and the Sun but was known as the goddess of moisture and the mother of the sky and the Earth. She was generally depicted as either a lioness or a woman with a lion's head, with a temper to match, and was frequently drawn holding a sceptre, a sign of power.



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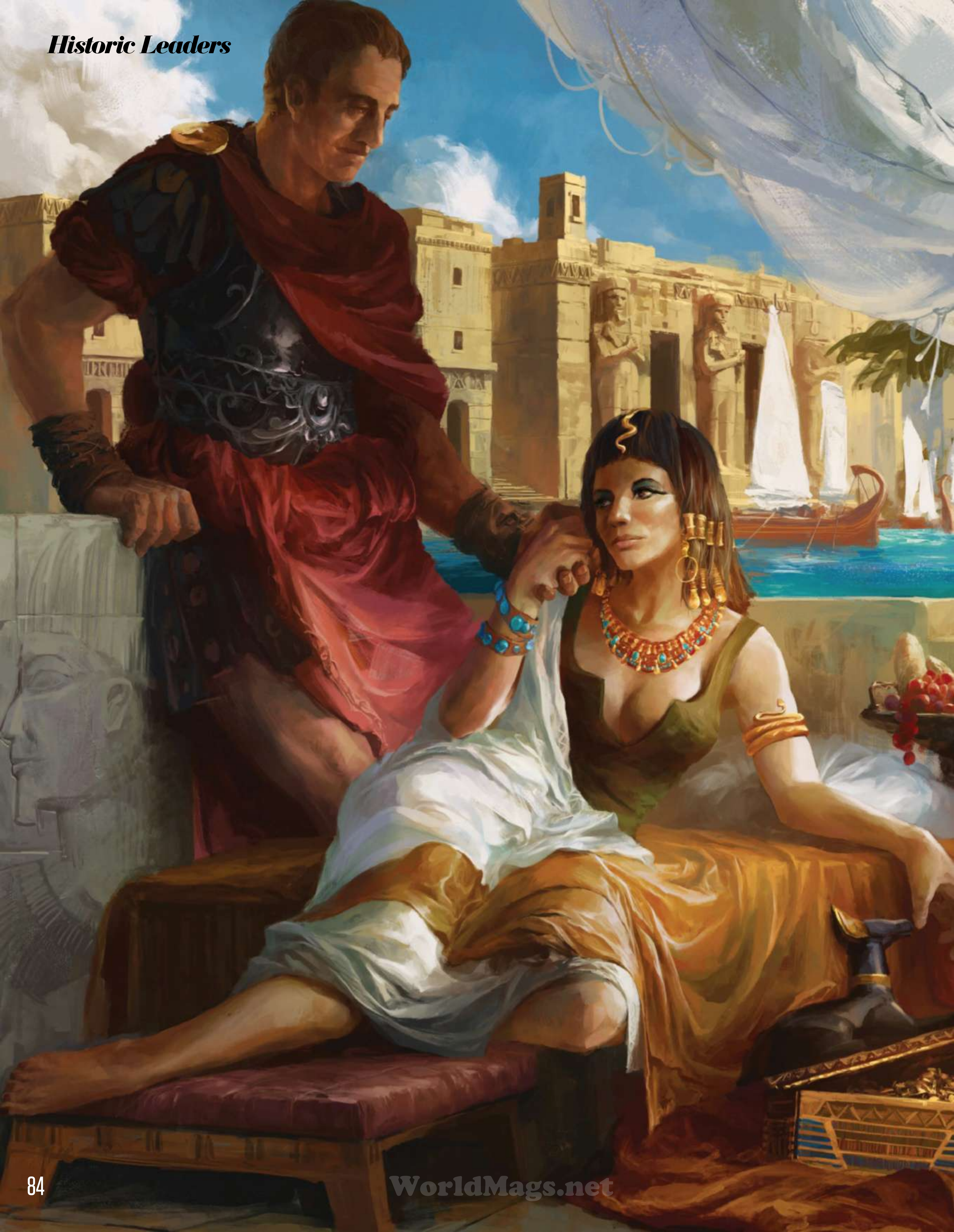


Cleopatra

In 30 BCE, a love affair between a powerful queen and a respected military leader caused scandal in Rome and ultimately brought about the end of a royal dynasty

Cleopatra VII remains an icon of both the ancient and modern world. Today, she continues to captivate and puzzle historians, remaining one of history's most enchanting and enigmatic figures.

The alliance of Mark Antony and Cleopatra changed the face of the world. A coalition which began as a political statement soon evolved into a tumultuous, and later tragic, love affair.

Despite her florid reputation, Cleopatra took only two lovers - both were rulers of Rome. Cleopatra recognised Rome as the leading power of the ancient world. Egypt, rich in gold and grain, provided the material resources to fuel that power. Both affairs had begun with a political agenda. They had enabled the queen to establish a secure and profitable union between Rome and Egypt. Despite this, however, events took an unexpected turn when she met the younger general. Cleopatra and Mark Antony fell in love, embarking on a passionate and unpredictable relationship that brought both riches and remorse. Their partnership, as lovers and politicians, both immortalised and destroyed a dynasty - it brought to a close 3,000 years of pharaonic rule.

Long before her meeting with Mark Antony, the queen had borne a child to her first Roman lover, Gaius Julius Caesar and she had named the child Caesarion - 'little Caesar'. In doing so, Cleopatra had secured for herself an enormous power base, for Caesar had no heir. Despite its material wealth, Egypt had suffered years of famine that had

CLEOPATRA VII

Egypt, circa 69-30 BCE

Brief Bio

Cleopatra was the daughter of Ptolemy XII Auletes and Cleopatra V. Born in Alexandria in 69 BCE her bloodline propagated a series of brother-sister marriages that were frequently corroded by family violence and murder. After a tumultuous reign, Octavian of Rome invaded Egypt and ended her rule. Rather than face the humiliation of defeat, Cleopatra committed suicide.

MARK ANTONY

Rome/Egypt, 83-30 BCE

Brief Bio

Marcus Antonius was born in 83 BC and, as a young man, was known as something of a playboy in Rome. But after fighting alongside Julius Caesar on the battlefield, he quickly established his military prowess. After Caesar's assassination, he formed a power trio with Marcus Lepidus and Octavian, but his growing love of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra would prove to be his downfall.

weakened the reserves of her granaries and her people. The country was in eclipse. Her allied states had also felt the grip of Rome tightening around their throats. Alexandria had long been important to Rome. As a gateway to the East, it was a major port with a large cosmopolitan community. It was renowned for its libraries, culture and trade. Egypt also had an abundant source of grain with which it fed its imperial army. On the other hand, the Romans regarded the Egyptian people and their religion with suspicion – its cults, along with its strange animal-headed gods, were an abomination to the refined Roman senses.

While her alliance with Rome continued, Cleopatra – and her throne – remained secure. For this reason, Cleopatra courted Rome and its leading figures. From the beginning, Cleopatra was an enigma to a man like Mark Antony. Having grown up in Rome, he was familiar with upper-class women who were cloistered in the home and whose only role in life was to be that of good wives and mothers. The women of Rome were largely regarded as vessels of chastity; Cleopatra was the antithesis of a Roman woman.

Growing up in a political, dangerous household where life was precarious, she was descended from a long line of rulers – all named Ptolemy – who could trace their line to the time of Alexander the Great. In order to keep their bloodline pure, female rulers often married their brothers. This practice brought outward strength but inner conflicts; during her early life Cleopatra witnessed brutal power struggles within her own family. Indeed, as her power grew, she had no choice but to execute her rival siblings.

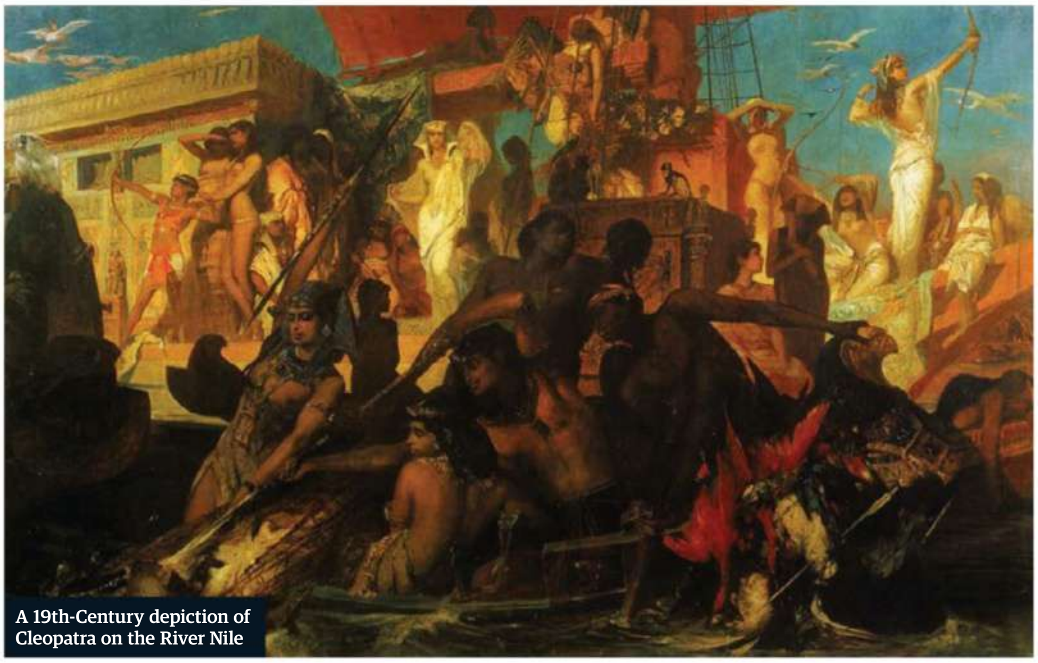
Cleopatra had to live by her wits. She was a highly educated woman with a sharp mind and a keen instinct. She spoke several languages, including Egyptian – making her unique among her peers. She was a cultivated woman, a patron of the arts and devoted to books. Despite her later reputation as a femme fatale, she was not considered beautiful. It was said she had a charismatic presence, was a fine conversationalist and had a sweet, seductive voice – a trait she may have cultivated as a child. Most importantly, Cleopatra was a survivor; she knew that in order to sustain her throne, she needed to control the might of Rome, and Mark Antony could offer this. Mark Antony and Cleopatra were as fire and water. Born in January 83 BCE, Antony was a true son of Rome. Like Cleopatra, he sought decadence and danger – he had quickly gained a reputation for drinking and gambling, and seems to have been attracted to exotic religious cults. Later, he earned fame and fortune among the militia; as the commander of a cavalry regiment he received great honours fighting with Caesar's armies in Gaul. Antony and Caesar formed a mutual friendship and a distant kinship had strengthened their alliance. As Caesar's star ascended, so too had Mark Antony's, and when the elder man became dictator, Antony was appointed Magister Equitum (Master of the Horse) and governed Rome in Caesar's absence. Better suited to the battlefield, Mark Antony made an impetuous politician – highly volatile, his excesses in wine and women became the topic of much public gossip, for these often included affairs with other men's wives.

After the assassination of Caesar, Cleopatra and Mark Antony fled Rome and Cleopatra returned to Egypt. With Caesar dead, her position had become tenuous. The Romans regarded a female ruler with abhorrence and she desperately needed an ally in the Senate. When revolt failed to materialise, Mark Antony returned to the Forum to find a city outraged at the atrocities that had befallen Caesar.

The assassins were executed or fell into obscurity, and it was left to Octavian (Caesar's appointed heir), Lepidus (his trusted commander) and Mark Antony to calm the storm. The three men formed the Second Triumvirate granting themselves equal powers of government.

Antony was now in a strong position. As the three men began to carve out Roman territory each assigned themselves important provinces. Mark

> "Octavian arranged a marriage between Mark Antony and his sister, Octavia – infuriating the Egyptian queen"



A 19th-Century depiction of Cleopatra on the River Nile

Myth vs reality

Just how realistic is our modern conception of the Egyptian queen?

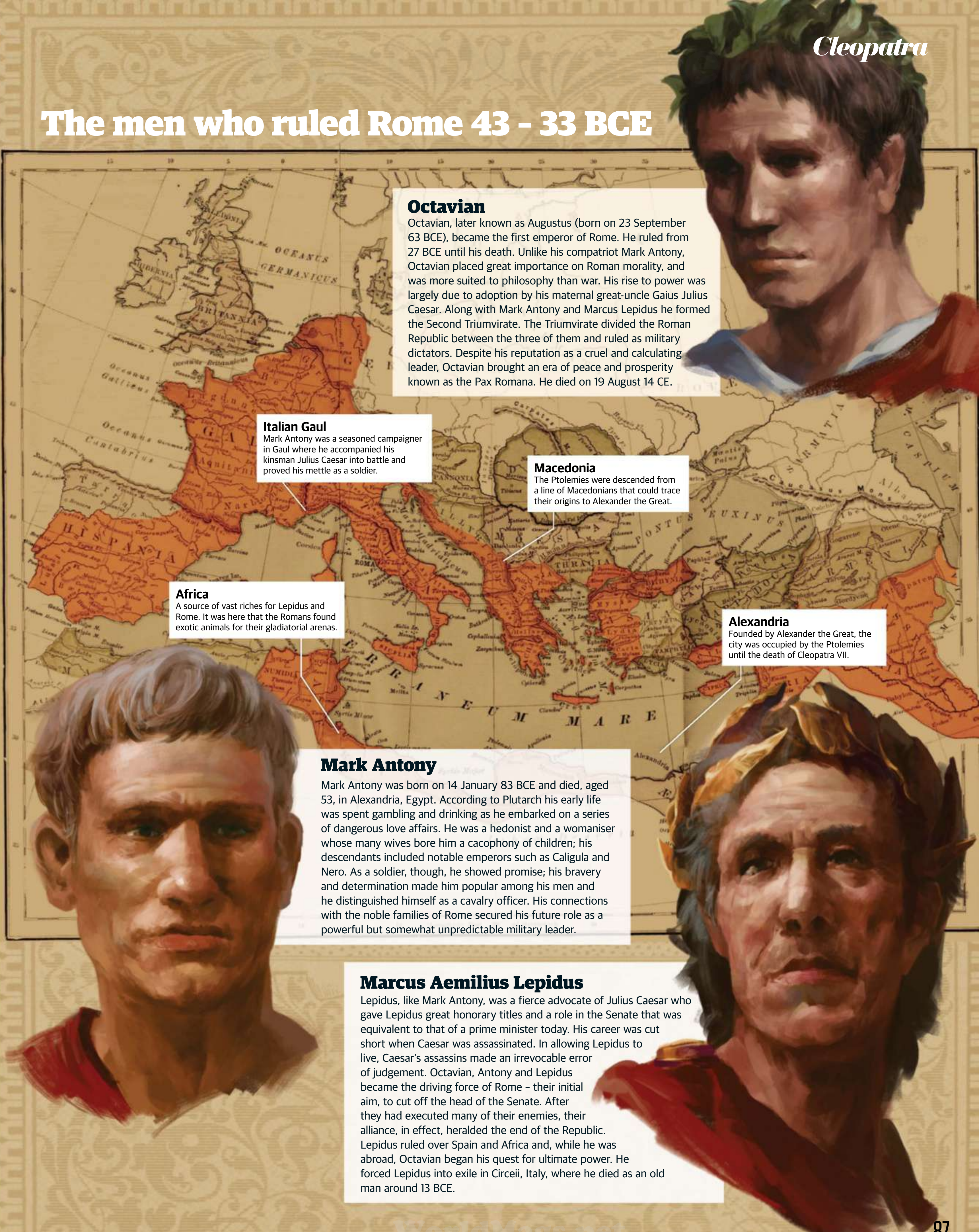
A modern reader's perspective of Cleopatra has no doubt been heavily influenced by the numerous works of fiction that have been released charting her life in the many centuries following her death. Foremost among these must arguably be William Shakespeare's 1623 tragedy Antony And Cleopatra, a play that follows events from the Sicilian revolt of 44 BCE through to the Final War of the Roman Republic in which Cleopatra commits suicide in 30 BCE by asp bite.

In this performance, Cleopatra is frequently portrayed as beautiful, power-hungry and manipulative. So how accurate is Shakespeare's representation of the Egyptian ruler? Well, it is loosely based on a translation of Plutarch's Parallel Lives – a series of biographies on famous Greek and Roman men that were printed in a first edition in Florence in the early-16th Century (no doubt where Shakespeare picked it up). The one in question from which the Great Bard draws is the Life Of Mark Antony, which is interesting, as it does not deal directly with the pharaoh but rather with the Roman general and his relationship to her.

Further, Shakespeare does not lay out events of the time as stated by Plutarch, with dates and events shifted in time and contrasting accounts of Cleopatra simplified. A good example of this is how varying accounts of her death, including death by poisoning, willing death by snake bike to the arm and unwilling accidental snakebite to the arm, is rewritten as willing death by snakebite to the breast.

Of course, Shakespeare's account of Cleopatra has been further embellished in subsequent centuries with other works of fiction such as the well-known 1963 Hollywood film adaptation of her life with Elizabeth Taylor playing the lead. Aside from Taylor's questionable portrayal, this movie introduced many smaller yet pervasive inaccuracies such as Cleopatra wearing her hair in bangs. In reality, the Egyptian queen would have worn a wig of tight curls on top of her head, which would have been shaven.

The men who ruled Rome 43 – 33 BCE



Octavian

Octavian, later known as Augustus (born on 23 September 63 BCE), became the first emperor of Rome. He ruled from 27 BCE until his death. Unlike his compatriot Mark Antony, Octavian placed great importance on Roman morality, and was more suited to philosophy than war. His rise to power was largely due to adoption by his maternal great-uncle Gaius Julius Caesar. Along with Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus he formed the Second Triumvirate. The Triumvirate divided the Roman Republic between the three of them and ruled as military dictators. Despite his reputation as a cruel and calculating leader, Octavian brought an era of peace and prosperity known as the Pax Romana. He died on 19 August 14 CE.

Italian Gaul

Mark Antony was a seasoned campaigner in Gaul where he accompanied his kinsman Julius Caesar into battle and proved his mettle as a soldier.

Macedonia

The Ptolemies were descended from a line of Macedonians that could trace their origins to Alexander the Great.

Africa

A source of vast riches for Lepidus and Rome. It was here that the Romans found exotic animals for their gladiatorial arenas.

Alexandria

Founded by Alexander the Great, the city was occupied by the Ptolemies until the death of Cleopatra VII.

Mark Antony

Mark Antony was born on 14 January 83 BCE and died, aged 53, in Alexandria, Egypt. According to Plutarch his early life was spent gambling and drinking as he embarked on a series of dangerous love affairs. He was a hedonist and a womaniser whose many wives bore him a cacophony of children; his descendants included notable emperors such as Caligula and Nero. As a soldier, though, he showed promise; his bravery and determination made him popular among his men and he distinguished himself as a cavalry officer. His connections with the noble families of Rome secured his future role as a powerful but somewhat unpredictable military leader.

Marcus Aemilius Lepidus

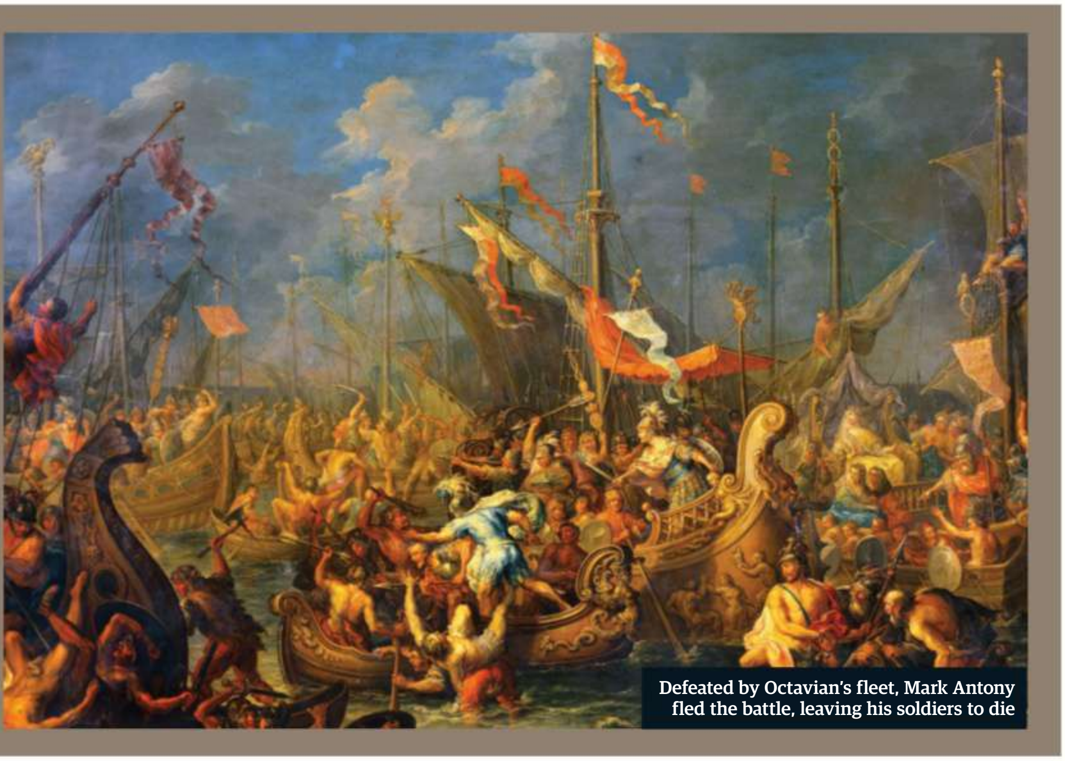
Lepidus, like Mark Antony, was a fierce advocate of Julius Caesar who gave Lepidus great honorary titles and a role in the Senate that was equivalent to that of a prime minister today. His career was cut short when Caesar was assassinated. In allowing Lepidus to live, Caesar's assassins made an irrevocable error of judgement. Octavian, Antony and Lepidus became the driving force of Rome – their initial aim, to cut off the head of the Senate. After they had executed many of their enemies, their alliance, in effect, heralded the end of the Republic. Lepidus ruled over Spain and Africa and, while he was abroad, Octavian began his quest for ultimate power. He forced Lepidus into exile in Circeii, Italy, where he died as an old man around 13 BCE.

Actium

The ancient battle that changed the world

The battle took place on 2 September 31 BCE, on the Ionian Sea on the border of the city of Actium. It was thought that Antony's fleet had the advantage. It boasted 500 ships – each a war galley designed with turrets. Known as quinqueremes, Mark Antony's warships each weighed 300 tons; they were especially designed to ram enemy vessels. Commanded by his general, Marcus Agrippa, Octavian's fleet consisted of 250 ships. Agrippa launched his initial attack from the left wing of the fleet and attempted to outflank Mark Antony – the battle was brutal and prolonged.

Unfortunately, many of Antony's soldiers were dying of malaria and his ships were undermanned. Therefore, Octavian's fleet was greatly encouraged. These Liburnian vessels were manned by well-trained and rested soldiers, and the ships were fast and agile. As they outmanoeuvred their enemy, the deck soldiers used fire arrows and slingshots to diminish their capability. Realising the severity of his situation, Mark Antony decided to retreat and regroup. He took advantage of a break in the enemy formation and made a dash for it. In doing so, he abandoned many of his men to their fate.



Defeated by Octavian's fleet, Mark Antony fled the battle, leaving his soldiers to die

Antony had set his heart on Cleopatra and Egypt. He sent a message to his lover asking her to meet him at Tarsus in modern-day Turkey, determined to win her support for his military campaigns.

On this particular meeting she presented herself as the embodiment of the goddess Venus. The imperial queen of Egypt arrived on a golden barge; decked in fine linen and precious gems, she was attended by servants dressed as sea nymphs. While she drifted towards Mark Antony like a creature from myth, she refused to disembark. As queen of Egypt, she expected Antony to wait on her.

Mark Antony's temper was inflamed, but so were his passions. Plutarch said of their relationship: "observing Cleopatra's looks and her subtlety and tricky wit in conversation, he [Antony's agent] at once knew that Antony would never think of doing such a woman any harm, and that in fact she'd have the greatest influence over him."

Not surprisingly, Antony chose to spend the winter of 41-40 BCE with Cleopatra in Alexandria – the result of this visit was the birth of twin children, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene II, whose names are linked with the dual powers of the Sun and the Moon.

Rome was greatly disturbed by this turn of events. In order to secure his loyalty, Octavian arranged a marriage between Mark Antony and his sister, Octavia – a move that infuriated the Egyptian queen. To avoid a public insult, Mark Antony stumbled into an acrimonious and dangerous union. Meanwhile, the queen of Egypt financed his army, allowing him to capture Jerusalem where he installed Herod as the puppet king of Judaea. Four years later, Antony visited Alexandria again en route to make war with the Parthians. His relationship with Cleopatra had gathered momentum and he had made Alexandria his home. Despite his union with Octavia, he married Cleopatra and they had another child.

Soon, Antony grew tired of luxurious living, exotic palaces and hunting in the Egyptian Delta; he longed for the glories of war. When Antony invaded Parthian territory with an army of about 100,000 Roman and allied troops, the campaign proved disastrous. He never recovered from the shock of defeat. Octavian took this opportunity; he demoted Lepidus, belittled Mark Antony and seized unilateral power. He reminded Rome of the menacing relationship between Antony and his abominable foreign queen. While feigning shock at the abandonment of his sister, he told the citizens of Rome that Mark Antony was now living as an Egyptian; this was regarded as an act of treason. Antony and Cleopatra responded to the attack with theatrics. After a successful invasion of Armenia, Mark Antony infuriated his fellow Romans by holding a Triumph (formal celebration) in the city of Alexandria. Mark Antony then issued a series of proclamations known as the Donations of Alexandria, when he named Cleopatra and her children heirs to his conquered territories. It was, in effect, a declaration of war. Mark Antony named Caesarion the legitimate son and heir of Caesar – Octavian, of course, being the 'adopted' son of the former dictator. Octavian had no choice but to retaliate. He told the Senate that Antony had "gone native" and that he had been effeminated by the Egyptian queen. Mark Antony divorced Octavia and

"Roman law dictated Cleopatra should be treated as an enemy, taken back to Rome and paraded before the mob"

End of an era

Cleopatra's surviving children were adopted by Octavia, became Roman citizens and faded quickly into obscurity. Egypt, now a Roman province, was ruled by a prefect. Greek remained the official language. While Alexandria continued to flourish, it became a site of many religious and military uprisings. In 269 CE Alexandria was claimed by yet another woman, when Zenobia, the ferocious warrior Queen of Palmyra, conquered Egypt. Zenobia – an admirer of Cleopatra – was quick to behead her detested Roman foes. She ruled Egypt until 274, before she herself was taken hostage by the Roman Emperor Aurelian; in an ironic twist of fate, Zenobia appeared in golden chains during Aurelian's Triumph in Rome.

The legacy of Greco-Roman Egypt still survives. It can be seen in a series of magnificent temples that were built along the River Nile. These include the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, where fabulous images of Cleopatra and Caesarion still dominate its walls.

The delicate amalgamation of the Egyptian and Roman cultures can be seen on many mummy portrait panels from the Greco-Roman period. Contrasts are visible in paintings and sculptures where traditional Egyptian iconography is paired with Roman symbolism. The result – a hybrid blend of the ancient and even more ancient – is now all that remains of the former bond between Rome and Egypt: Antony and Cleopatra.

accused Octavian of forging Caesar's will. Rome was drawn into a civil war – which culminated in the defeat of Antony at the Battle of Actium.

After his clear victory, Octavian returned to Rome. During the 12 months that followed, he left Antony and Cleopatra to contemplate their defeat and consider their demise. Egypt's neighbouring territories were largely annexed to Rome; for this reason, Antony and Cleopatra's attempts to regroup and raise an army proved futile.

It was in August 30 BCE that Octavian finally invaded Egypt. Antony made one last valiant attempt to usurp the Roman leader, but in the end, his fate had been cast. He did what was required of all honourable Roman soldiers and fell upon his sword. In an attempt to safeguard her children Cleopatra made a tentative effort to make terms with Octavian. In his final hour, Antony was brought to Cleopatra's mausoleum and he died in her arms. Octavian allowed Cleopatra to conduct burial rituals for Antony's body. While he presented an outward show of friendship, he naturally wanted her dead. He was, in fact, in a difficult position.

> "Antony made one last valiant attempt to usurp the Roman leader"

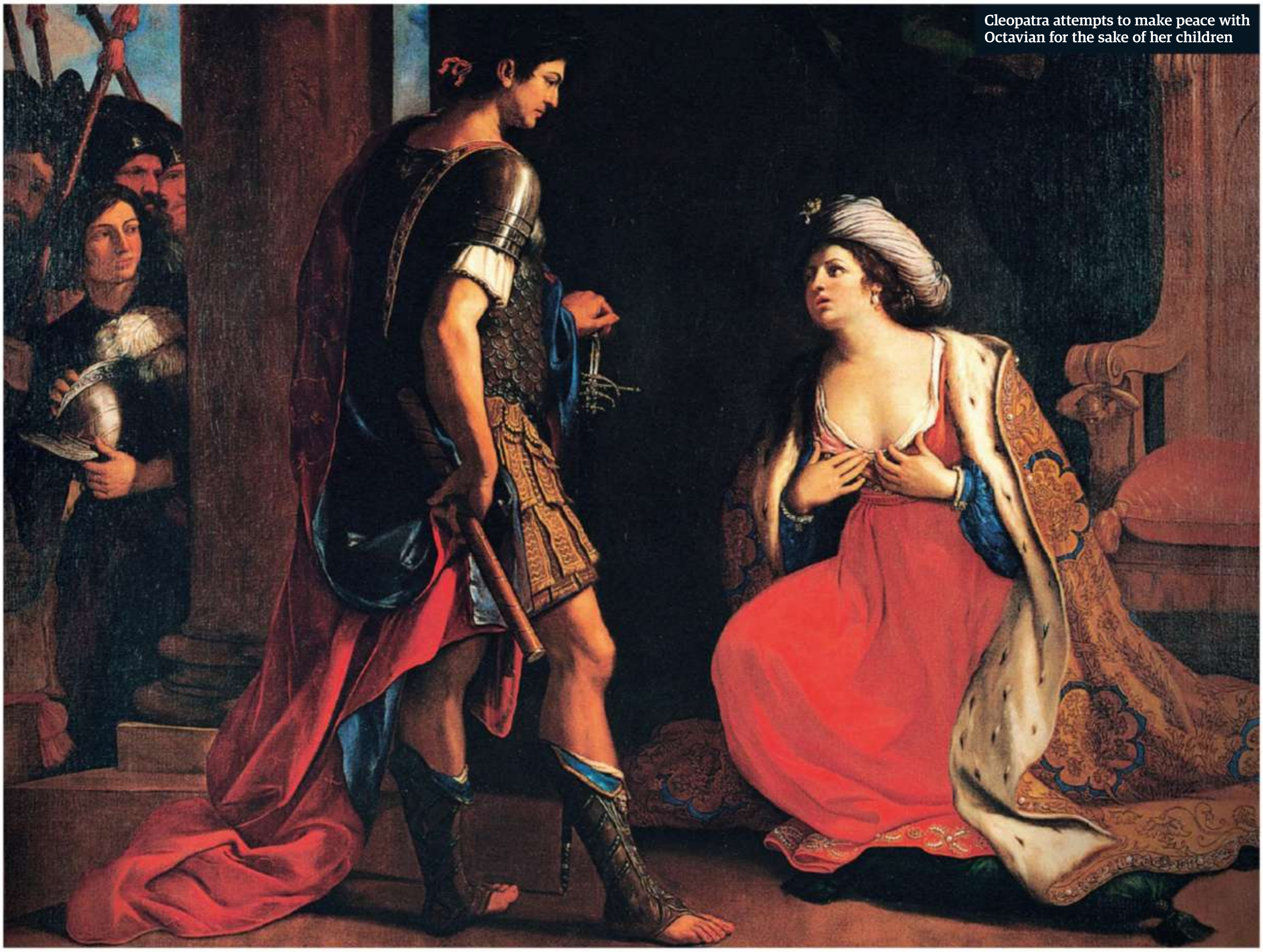
Roman law dictated that Cleopatra should be treated as an enemy of the state. She should be taken back to Rome in shackles and paraded before the mob. However, a female ruler was a rare entity – the display could end up backfiring on Octavian and prove highly distasteful.

He was relieved then, when Cleopatra took the courageous decision to end her own life. Some historians believe that she was bitten by a snake hidden in a fig basket. Others suggest that she drank wine laced with hemlock. An account of her death can be found in Plutarch's Lives.

'The messengers [of Octavian] came at full speed, and found the guards apprehensive of nothing; but, on opening the doors, they saw her stone-dead, lying upon a bed of gold, set out in all her royal ornaments. Iras, one of her women, lay dying at her feet, and Charmion, just ready to fall, scarce able to hold up her head, was adjusting her mistress's diadem. And when one that came in said angrily, "Was this well done of your lady, Charmion?" "Extremely well," she answered, "and as became the descendant of so many kings". As she said this she fell down dead by the bedside.

In Rome, the son of the orator Cicero announced the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra with relish. Mark Antony was stripped of his accolades, his image erased from coinage and his statues removed. Under threat from Octavian, Iullus Antonius – Mark Antony's eldest son – committed suicide. Concurring with Arius Didymus – "It is bad to have too many Caesars" – Octavian also had Caesarion murdered. The remaining children of Cleopatra and Antony were spared and taken to Rome where they were adopted by Antony's family.

With the death of Cleopatra, the Sun had finally set on the Hellenistic Dynasty – and indeed on the 3,000-year rule of the pharaohs.



Cleopatra attempts to make peace with Octavian for the sake of her children

© Alamy; Jay Wong

Herod I, King of Judea

Cruel, paranoid and held in the grips of madness, Herod I ruled the ancient kingdom of Judea with an iron fist, brutally slaying any who opposed him

Herod of Idumea was born into one of the most volatile regions of the ancient world. He quickly learned to fear rivals, suspect betrayal and watch his own back. The Romans had taken over much of his homeland, and solidified their grip on the area through unpopular puppet kings. Rebellion was in the air, and from a young age Herod was forced to pick sides – work with the invaders or fight for an independent homeland. His father was a high-ranking official of King Hyrcanus II and had the ear of the Roman senate, so used this prestigious position to grant Herod a governorship in 49 BCE in the province of Galilee. Herod knew this position came from powerful Roman patronage, and he made sure the Romans knew he would continue supporting them if they supported him by instigating a brutal regime in Galilee for the glory of Rome.

Unfortunately for Herod, not everyone shared his astute sense of accommodation when it came to the Romans. In 40 BCE, the puppet king Hyrcanus died and was replaced by Antigonus, who quickly set about ejecting the Roman garrisons from Judea and exterminating any native that had conspired with them against their own people. For Herod this meant he lost his power and position. He was forced to flee into the night, and lacking anywhere else to go, he travelled to the heart of the Roman empire to beg Caesar to help him.

Herod's presence in Rome was not an unusual one; many high-ranking foreigners travelled to the sprawling city to seek patronage and aid from the Roman senators who decided the fate of kingdoms. What was unusual was how unpopular Herod was within the city. The Jewish population saw him as a tyrannical traitor, the Romans saw him as an incompetent beggar. The decision by the senate to make Herod King of the Jews was only made through a lack of a better option. As far as Caesar and the senators were concerned, Judea needed a leader who was strong and loyal to the Roman cause. Herod wasn't strong, nor was he particularly loyal, but he understood power and the protection Rome could offer him if he became their puppet.

Herod was known to suffer hallucinations of his dead wife and slip into psychotic states when he was being threatened

With thousands of Roman legionaries behind him and one of Rome's greatest war heroes, Mark Antony, by his side, Herod marched proudly back to his homeland as a conqueror in 37 BCE. He would not be satisfied with a mere governorship this time; he wanted ultimate power. He decided to ignore

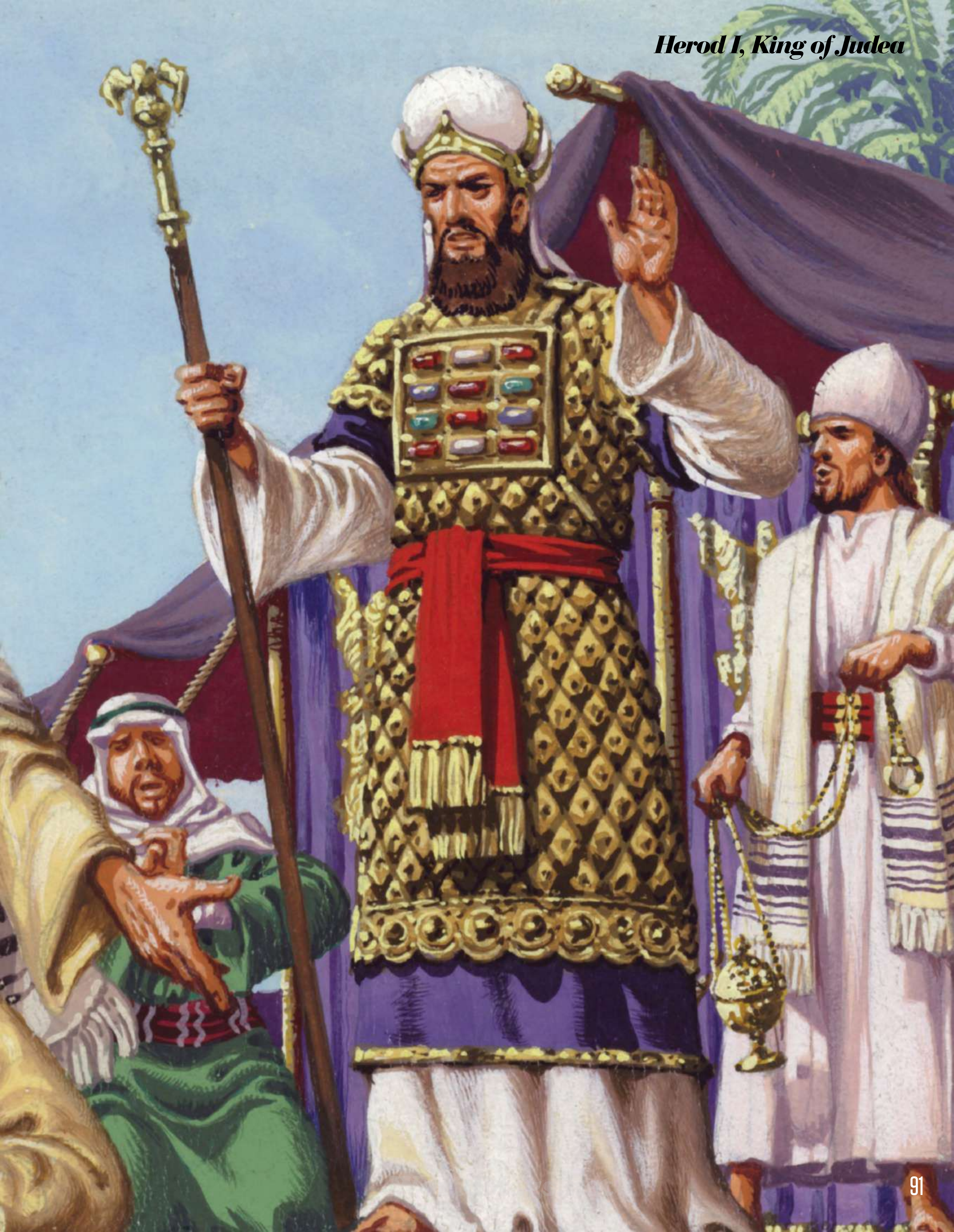
During his reign, Herod commissioned a number of building projects, including a huge temple in Jerusalem

HEROD I

Judea, 73/74 – 4 BCE

Brief Bio

A client king for the Roman Republic (soon to become the Roman Empire), Herod wheedled his way to kingship. In biblical stories he is remembered as the tyrant who authorised the Massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem. He was just as cruel in historical fact, suffering from paranoid and violent delusions of persecution.

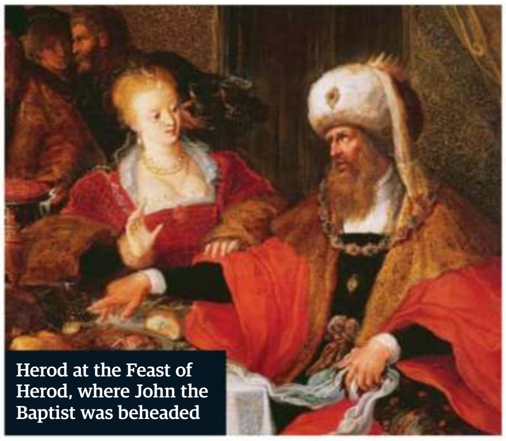


Herod I, King of Judea

"The Jewish population saw him as a tyrannical traitor, the Romans saw him as an incompetent beggar"

the outlying provinces and concentrate his forces around Jerusalem with the approval of Antony. The siege lasted for 40 days. The defenders were desperate to hold onto their new-found freedom from Roman oppression, but in the end Herod breached the walls and thousands of bloodthirsty Roman warriors stormed the city. The devastation was horrendous; the Romans slaughtered men, women and children, brutally slaying the people who dared defy Caesar's will. Herod was outraged; he wanted to subdue the population, not butcher them, and he knew all of Judea would never forget the Jewish blood spilled that day. His complaints to Antony fell on deaf ears – as far as he was concerned, it was all in a day's work.

Antony left Herod in the smouldering ruins of his new kingdom with enough Roman guards to keep an eye on him. From now on, Herod would be taking his orders directly from Rome. Immediately, Herod self-styled himself as high ruler of what remained of Jerusalem and the rest of Judea. His subjects were less than convinced; his claim to the throne was based on little more than the Roman bodyguards he had surrounding him. As a way of trying to gain some respect after putting his own people to the sword, he married his second wife – a Hasmonean princess called Mariamne – in 32 BCE. Mariamne was from an old Judean family that could trace its origins back to the conquest of Alexander the Great, and Herod hoped the marriage would give his rule an amount of legitimacy.


Herod at the Feast of Herod, where John the Baptist was beheaded

The marriage failed to gain the love of the people, and as he began to settle down to the task of ruling his unhappy kingdom, he felt more vulnerable. He feared assassination at every turn, particularly from his own family. He had his brother-in-law from his first marriage drowned in his own pleasure pool because he feared the Romans would prefer him as ruler of Judea. Then in 31 BCE, Herod received word that Rome had become engulfed in a power struggle between Octavian Caesar and Herod's old friend Antony. Like all vassals reliant on Rome's good will, Herod was forced to take sides, and in keeping with his preference for backing the strongest player, he chose Antony. The odds were very much stacked in Antony's favour, but he lost the struggle nonetheless, and Herod found himself in a very awkward position; the man in charge of Rome was the man he sided against. He sent a

Herod's patrons were the Romans; they gave him his political legitimacy and enough military muscle to keep Judea under his rule

Life in the time of Herod

Roman rule

The Middle East, which consisted of the Jewish and pagan kingdoms located around the coastline of the Mediterranean, was influenced and controlled by the Roman rulers through vassals and puppet kings. The Romans needed the kingdoms for their resources, and to guard the eastern flank of the empire from the ever-present threat of the Persians.

Culture shock

Herod's kingdom was made up of a number of different tribes that settled in the area or who were cast out of Persia over the previous three centuries. Contrasting cultures were active in the region, some adopting Judaism while others followed Roman, Greek or pagan traditions, creating deep social divides.

Fractured

Due to the fractious nature of Judean society, many areas within the kingdom that Herod ruled did not recognise him as a legitimate king. Herod himself had very little in the way of military muscle to keep the different communities in line, and often had to rely on his Roman patrons to subdue the population.

Political games

Herod's position as a Roman vassal was not an easy one. Roman politics was going through a radical transformation during this period, which involved violent civil wars. Herod had to make sure he was backing the right man, or if he wasn't, change sides quickly to avoid being disposed of.

Rebel groups

Due to the brutal repression under Herod through the Roman legions stationed in Judea, a number of rebel groups sprung up, bent on ending his reign of terror for good. These groups were forced to fight a guerrilla war, as they could not raise a standing army that could beat Caesar's legions.

Defining moment

Fall of Jerusalem

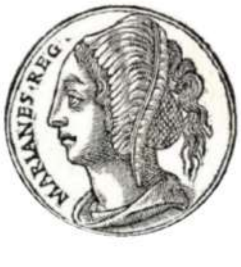
37 BCE

Herod, with the help of a number of Roman legions supplied by Mark Antony, invades Judea and lays siege to Jerusalem. The walls are surrounded and huge siege engines are built to devastate the city's populace hiding within the city. After 40 days of fighting, the townspeople begin to weaken through starvation, and Herod breaches the walls. When the Romans storm the city, they butcher the population. This angers Herod because his reputation would now be tarnished by the Romans' actions. Despite Herod's desire to appease the population after the siege, he still has the popular Antigonus executed because he represents a threat.

Timeline

74 BCE

- **Birth of Herod**
  Herod is born in Idumea as the second son of Antipater – a high-ranking official in the kingdom of Judea. Antipater quickly manoeuvres his son into a position of authority.
  74 BCE
- **Appointed governor of Galilee**
  Through his father's influence, Herod is made governor of Galilee – a Judean satellite state. His father continues to gain influence throughout Judea because of his good relations with the Romans.
  49 BCE
- **Flight to Rome**
  After the anti-Roman king Antigonus II takes power in Judea, Herod is forced to flee and persuade the Romans to help him regain his power in the region.
  40 BCE
- **Elected King of the Jews**
  During his stay in Rome, Herod convinces the senate that he should be made King of the Jews. The Romans agree with the proviso that he acts as a vassal on his return to Judea.
  40 BCE



- **Marriage to Mariamne**
  Herod marries a Hasmonean princess, Mariamne, who is also a member of the Judean ruling class, in an effort to give his new status as King of the Jews legitimacy.
  32 BCE

number of grovelling letters to Octavian promising his undying loyalty in return for being allowed to keep his job as King of the Jews. Octavian reluctantly allowed him to remain king, again more through a lack of a better option than any reflection on Herod's skill as a leader.

Despite having survived one of the most destructive civil wars in Rome's history, Herod remained uneasy. He became estranged from his wife after he had her placed under guard to prevent her from claiming the throne for the Hasmoneans if he died during the fighting. He heard more rumours of threats against his life, he feared Mariamne would try to grab power by killing him in revenge for having her arrested, his behaviour became increasingly erratic and he fell into a strange psychotic state of paranoia. While he was suffering from this break from reality, he became convinced Mariamne was going to kill him, so he acted. He had her beheaded, but as soon as the axe fell, he came around from his delusion and realised he'd made a terrible mistake. He wept uncontrollably for weeks and began hallucinating visions of his dead wife screaming in agony in the corridors of his palace.

In an effort to try and turn his mind away from these terrifying visions, he began to construct a grand temple designed to be the envy of the ancient world. Construction started just after the death of Mariamne, and was only halted briefly after a great famine struck the city. When Caesar's aide Marcus Agrippa visited the city in 15 BCE, he was amazed at the temple's construction and how modern Jerusalem looked since its sacking by Antony. Agrippa held court with Herod, and Herod, knowing that weakness in front of the Romans could be dangerous, managed to hide his precarious mental state. Underneath this façade, he was a man edging ever closer to madness.

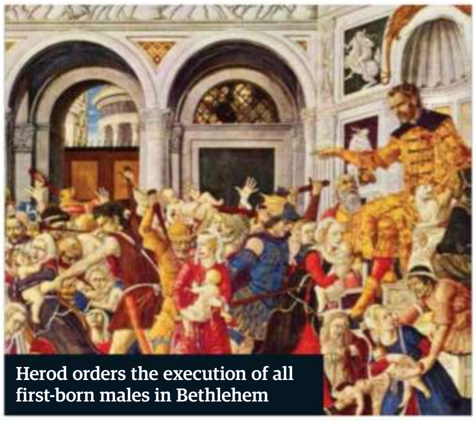
After Agrippa left for the gates of Rome, Herod quickly returned to the depths of paranoia. He brutally slaughtered any who spoke out against his dictatorial regime, and the country lived in fear of his violent moodswings. He burned alive a group of rabbis and their students who had pulled down a Roman imperial eagle in a building in Jerusalem. He then executed two of his eldest sons because he thought they were plotting against him. By 4 BCE, he feared that he had become so unpopular that no one would mourn his passing after he died. In a fit of depraved madness, he ordered the families of the nobility throughout the kingdom to attend him on pain of death. He then had them rounded up and placed under guard in the city's hippodrome. The guards were ordered to murder them when he died so his death would be mourned.

As the families in the hippodrome huddled together, terrified at the prospect of being put to death as a sacrifice to the passing of their own king, Herod laid on his deathbed racked with pain. He was suffering from kidney failure and the paranoid delusions that had finally left him senseless. He saw visions of his beloved Mariamne and was tortured by her mutilated face. When he finally died screaming in agony in 4 BCE, the holy men of Jerusalem proclaimed that his horrific death was, 'the penalty that God was exacting of the king for his great impiety.' Herod's sister countermanded the order to kill the Judean families and the kingdom celebrated; Herod 'the mad and wicked' was dead.

> In a fit of psychotic rage, Herod killed his two eldest sons because he thought they were plotting against his kingship

A biblical connection

Herod has been reviled in the bible as the monstrous tyrant who threatened the life of the baby that Christians believe was the son of God. Jesus of Nazareth's birth came at the end of Herod's reign, when his psychotic episodes had become increasingly dangerous to the people he suspected were plotting treason against him. According to the Bible, it was during one of these paranoid episodes that he heard word of a child being born proclaimed as the 'King of the Jews'. This was highly threatening as far as Herod was concerned, as he had never been fully accepted by his Jewish subjects as their true king, and any kind of usurpation from another individual claiming to be their ruler had to be destroyed. He went into a fit of rage, ordering all the sons of Bethlehem, the birth place of Jesus, murdered in what became known as the 'Massacre of the Innocents.' While the Bible is not considered historically accurate by scholars, Herod's violent reaction was alluded to by Roman sources writing after the event, and archaeologists have speculated the massacre occurred at some point in 5 BCE, a year before Herod died. His actions have since been immortalised through the story of the Nativity, and his reputation for uncompromising brutality has never been forgotten in Christian traditions.



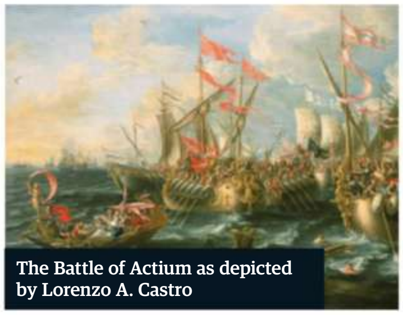
Herod orders the execution of all first-born males in Bethlehem

Defining moment

Trouble in Rome

31 BCE

A Roman civil war threatens to engulf Judea in factional fighting and Herod must decide which man to support - Octavian Caesar or his old friend Mark Antony. Antony's force, stationed in Egypt, appears to be the strongest, and initially Herod sides with him. After Antony's defeat, Herod endears himself to Octavian, pledging his loyalty to the new Roman leader. While Octavian is unconvinced of Herod's honesty, he recognises that he has served Rome well in the past, so allows Herod to stay on as King of Judea as long as he can control the population.



The Battle of Actium as depicted by Lorenzo A. Castro

Defining moment

Death of Herod

4 BCE

Herod dies in March or April 4 BCE after succumbing to 'Herod's evil', thought to be kidney disease and gangrene. He had already executed two of his eldest sons after another bout of paranoid madness, and he leaves Judea in open rebellion against Roman authority. The divided communities that make up the Judean state immediately demand independence, and only the presence of Roman legions under Octavian subdue the population adequately for Herod's three remaining sons to rule a third of the kingdom each under Roman patronage.

4 BCE

Mariamne arrested
In a fit of paranoia, Herod orders for Mariamne to be arrested after he fears that if he dies she will try and take the throne away from his son. This deeply offends Mariamne, and she becomes extremely hostile towards him.
31 BCE

Death of a princess
After further rumours about a plot to poison him, Herod condemns Mariamne to death to prevent her from trying to seize power. This action haunts him for the rest of his life.
29 BCE

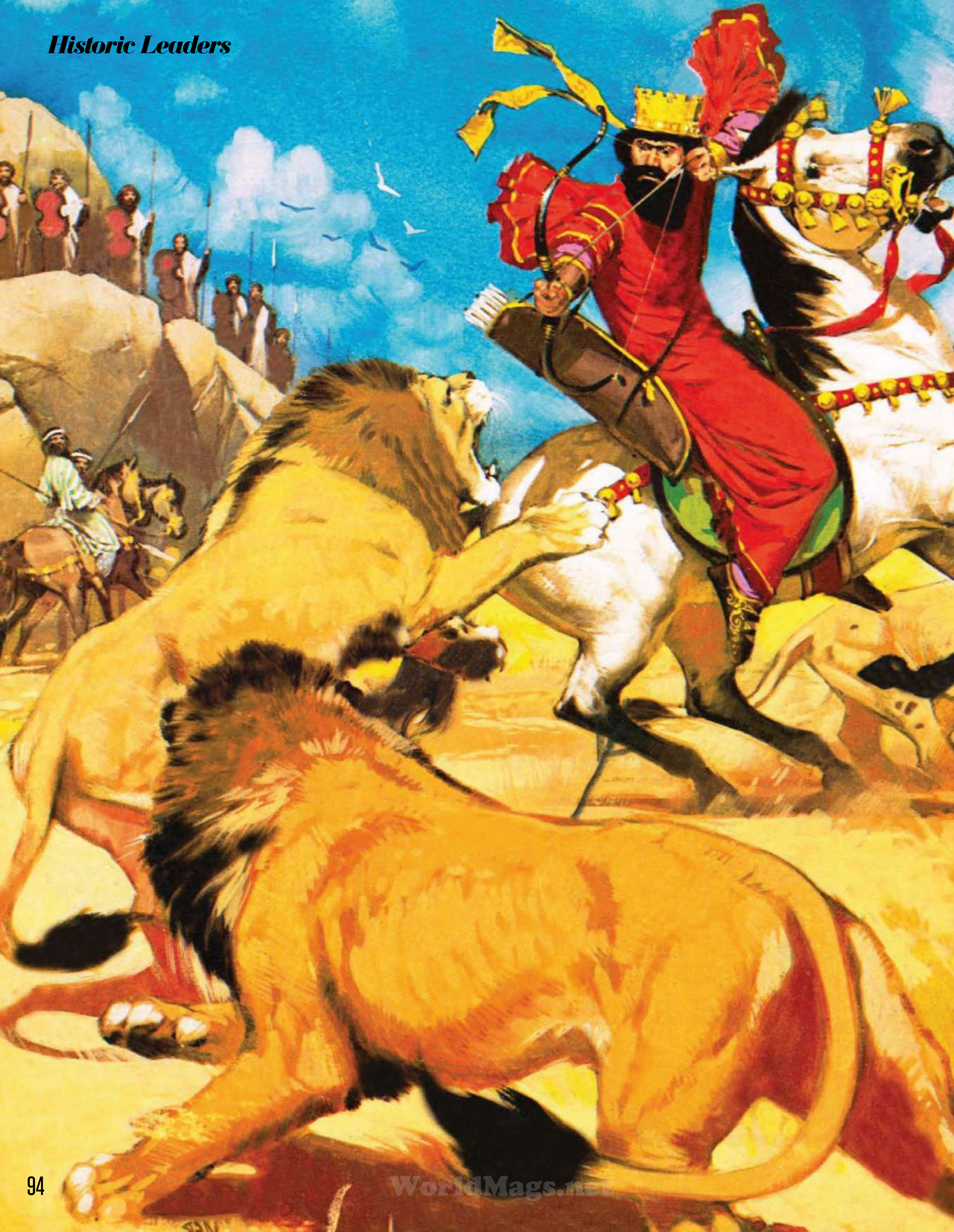
Famine
A great famine strikes Judea and its surrounding provinces. Herod Is forced to halt some of his grand architectural projects in order to buy grain to feed the population.
25 BCE

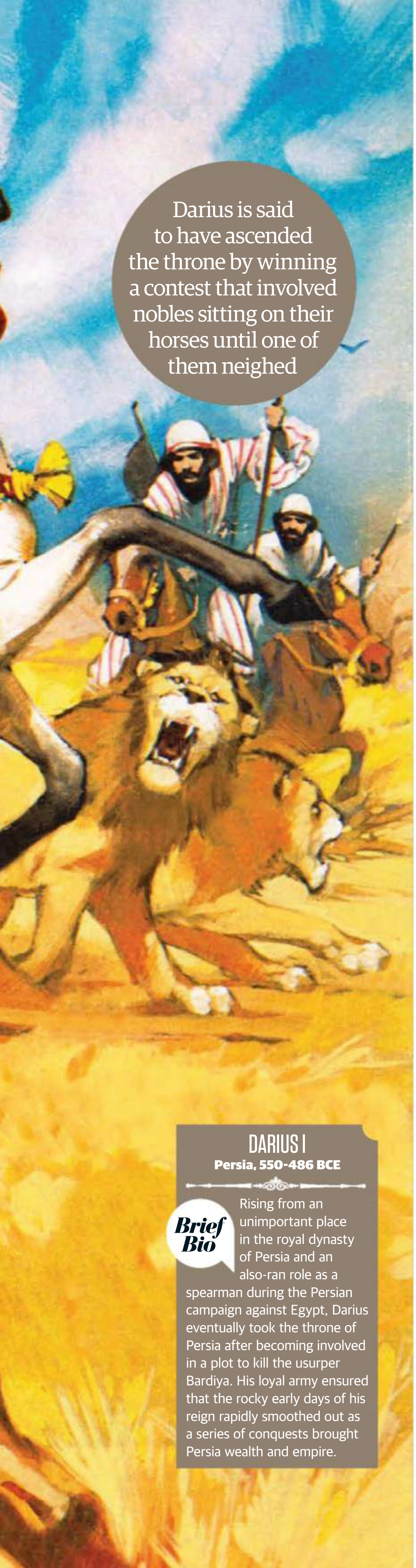
The grand temple
As a way of appeasing the Jewish population, Herod builds a grand temple in Jerusalem. Little remains of the site today, but it was said to be one of the largest buildings in the entire city.
20 BCE

Visit of Markus Agrippa
Agrippa visits the city to make sure Herod's loyalty has not abandoned him, and is astonished by the new masonry projects commissioned by the King of the Jews.
15 BCE

Burning of the teachers
In one of Herod's most brutal acts, he orders the death of a group of rabbis who were found destroying a Roman eagle within Jerusalem. They are thrown in a pit and burnt alive.
4 BCE

© Look and Learn; Getty; Alamy





Darius is said to have ascended the throne by winning a contest that involved nobles sitting on their horses until one of them neighed

King Darius I

Ruling the vast Persian Achaemenid Empire at its height, Darius I became world-renowned for his unstoppable military might, impressive construction prowess and an astute ability to manage his realm's finances

What would you do if you inherited one of the largest and most powerful empires the world had ever seen? Well, if you were Darius I, the third king of the mighty Persian Empire, you would spend your reign making it even better, transforming its economy and embarking on a series of military campaigns that would lead you to earn the title of Darius the Great.

However, Darius the Great didn't begin his life as a figure destined for greatness, being merely the eldest of five sons of Hystaspes, a member of the Persian royal house that served under King Cyrus and King Cambyses II. According to the account of Herodotus, the titular Father of History who details the Persian Empire in his *Histories*, Darius was a youth 'of no consequence at the time' and ended up nothing more than spearman in the army of Cambyses II during the Empire's Egyptian conquest. Later Darius would rise to become the personal lancer of Cambyses II and there it would seem his role in history could have ended, a mere footnote in an epic age.

All this would change in a radical series of events that, oddly enough, would begin with a dream. Following Cambyses being made King of Persia by his father Cyrus, and Darius ascending to Cambyses' side as his personal lancer, Cyrus suddenly had a dream while he was away at war in which a vision of Darius equipped with wings

DARIUS I

Persia, 550-486 BCE

Brief Bio

Rising from an unimportant place in the royal dynasty of Persia and an also-ran role as a spearman during the Persian campaign against Egypt, Darius eventually took the throne of Persia after becoming involved in a plot to kill the usurper Bardiya. His loyal army ensured that the rocky early days of his reign rapidly smoothed out as a series of conquests brought Persia wealth and empire.

stood astride Europe and Asia. Upon waking, Cyrus decided that the dream was a warning that he and his son's empire was in danger and that Darius was forming plans to overthrow Cambyses. Fearing for his son's life, Cyrus sent Darius' father Hystaspes back to court to watch over his son strictly until he returned.

Returning to court, Hystaspes could not find any treasonable intentions in Darius during the time Cambyses remained king. Cambyses II's reign was indeed cut short, but rather than by Darius, a man who may or may not have been his brother, Bardiya, seized the throne for himself. According to the accounts of Darius' life, Cambyses attempted to march against Bardiya, but ended up committing suicide. Other accounts state that Cambyses died from a stab wound that turned gangrenous. Either way, Cyrus's fears had become reality, with Cambyses falling from power and the Persian Empire temporarily falling into chaos.

Darius, now freed from his role as lance-bearer to Cambyses, joined with various other noblemen from Persia who were against the usurper's rule and in September 522 BCE succeeded in a plot to kill the new king in the fortress of Sikayauvati. While the death of the usurper king ended months of chaos and uncertainty, the throne of the world's greatest empire was now vacant and with no obvious successor. What happens next is debated greatly among historians, with various different accounts describing the how Darius ascended the throne – some more bizarre than others. However, what all the accounts agree on is that the following morning Darius was King of Persia.

Darius was soon crowned at Pasargadae and afterwards he moved to Ecbatana to begin the rule of his vast empire. Just as soon as he arrived, however, he learned of numerous revolts against his leadership in Elam and Babylonia. He moved and crushed these quickly, but soon more revolts sprung up in Media, Parthia, Assyria and Egypt – now large swathes of his empire were openly at war with him. Just when things looked like they would end poorly for Darius, his substantial and overly loyal army came to his rescue, proceeding on a brutal campaign across Persia, smashing each revolt and executing its leaders. Within a single year every revolt was quelled and Darius was now unopposed as King of Persia.

From this point on Darius' reign went, in general, from strength to strength. He undertook many military campaigns in central Asia, Aria and Scythia, radically transforming the empire's economy and adding to its infrastructure greatly with new roads, canals and civic structures. The Achaemenid Empire was vast and now under Darius' astute management and delegation it became the world's most wealthy and powerful realm, expanding rapidly and even gaining the support of some of the powerful Greek city states, which had either been won over through force of arms or by trade. Darius was now effectively untouchable – his will was law and he was without doubt the most powerful man in the entire world.

There was one problem, though. One issue that, as Darius' reign progressed, not only became more apparent but could not be quelled or conquered. It was the fact that much of mainland Greece was – openly or not – hostile to the Persian Empire and kept expressing this by interfering in his captured territory of Ionia and Lydia in Asia Minor. Small skirmishes became larger fights, trade slowed and influence weakened, with tensions between Greeks and Persians escalating as a result. After almost a decade in which Darius' forces invaded Thrace and many cities of the northern Aegean, these tensions finally boiled over into open war, with the Greeks sending an army to burn Sardis, which is located in modern-day Turkey.

Darius responded to this by sanctioning not only the recapture of the region, which included many of the Ionian islands, but also a full-scale invasion of the Greek mainland, with Athens and Eretria – both key players in the burning of the city of Sardis – targeted for punishment. Assembling an army of over 20,000 men and placing them at the command of his most trusted of commanders,

Darius began many projects during his reign, including two canals linking the Red Sea to the River Nile

"Darius was now effectively untouchable, his will was law and he was the most powerful man in the entire world"

Simple spearman
According to historical reports, prior to seizing power, Darius was a simple spearman in the army of King Cambyses II of Persia, fighting much in the Egyptian campaign of 528-525
528 BCE

Timeline

550 BCE

The five Hystaspes sons
Darius I is born as the eldest of five sons to Hystaspes and Rhodugune. His father is an officer in King Cyrus II of Persia's army and a noble in his court.
550 BCE

Power grabbed
After an elevation to King Cambyses II's personal lancer, as well as the leader's death by his own hand – or maybe by assassination – Darius fights off rivals for the throne and quickly takes it for himself.
522 BCE

Indus Valley
Darius I, now King of Persia, begins a campaign of conquest into the Indus Valley. A year later he wins control of the valley from Gandhara to modem-day Karachi and appoints the Greek Scylax of Caryanda to explore the Indian Ocean.
516 BCE

Scythian failure
Darius leads a campaign against the Scythian people of eastern Europe. The Scythian army retreats deep into its territory and refuses to engage in combat with the Persians, outmanoeuvring Darius and forcing him to withdraw.
513 BCE

Asian minor submits
By 510 BCE Darius I expands his empire to include Asia minor and some of the Greek islands. The rest of Greece resists the Persian expansion, leading to an increase in tensions between the two rival powers.
510 BCE

Mardonius, Darius proceeded to take Thrace and Macedon. However, before he could advance any further his fleet was wrecked in a storm off the coast of Mount Athos, stopping his conquest of Greece dead. Battered by the storm and harried by the Greek army, Darius' men were forced to withdraw, returning to Persia.

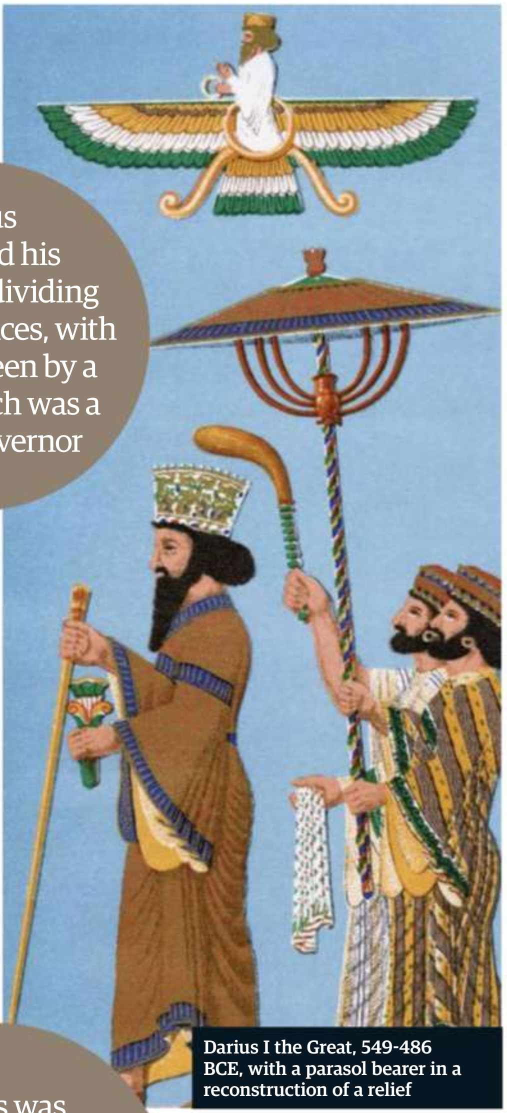
Not used to failure, Darius immediately directed his empire's vast resources to instigate another invasion, assembling a second army of 20,000 men and sending them back to Greece under the command of his nephew Artaphernes and his most trusted admiral Datis. This time Darius' army wasn't hindered in its passing and upon landing in Greece in 490 BCE it besieged, captured and burnt Eretria before quickly advancing towards the city of Marathon.

At this point, victory for Darius seemed all but certain, however outside of Marathon his army was met with a Greek one that, despite being half its number, pulled off one of the most remarkable military victories in history, defeating the Persians in mortal combat and forcing the remnants to retreat for a second time back to Persia.

This defeat at Marathon marked the end of the first Persian invasion of Greece and, despite him proceeding to live a few more years, the end of Darius I too, with the great king's health rapidly deteriorating over the next four years. Darius the Great died in Persia in 486 BCE, where his body was embalmed and then placed in a gigantic tomb. His kingdom was passed on to his son, Xerxes, who would himself would go on to famously launch the second Persian invasion of Greece. Unfortunately for him, just like his father, the might of the Persian Empire, by far one of the largest military forces in the world up to that point, would not be enough to deliver victory.

Modern-day views on Darius the Great's tenure as king are mixed, tending to differ from ancient sources in that they take a wider perspective on his reign, rather than merely his substantial conquests. The Persian Empire was indeed expanded by Darius and he recorded some notable military victories, however his inability to defeat the Scythians and Greeks caused his military record to be tarnished. If you look at his reign more from a cultural and financial perspective, it's arguably very positive. Darius can be credited for making the Archaemenid Empire the capital of trade, wealth and technological innovation, with many of his advances still being relevant today.

> Darius organised his empire by dividing it into provinces, with each overseen by a satrap, which was a type of governor



Darius I the Great, 549-486 BCE, with a parasol bearer in a reconstruction of a relief

> Darius was succeeded by his son, Xerxes, who had to contest the succession with his elder half-brother

An economical leadership

How did Darius help make the Persian Empire the wealthiest in the world?

During his time as King of Persia, Darius I conducted an introduction of a universal currency, the daric. This was introduced shortly before 500 BCE and was applied across the empire's constituent countries as a way to regulate trade and commerce. This move was so successful that the daric even became recognised beyond the Persian Empire, into central and eastern Europe.

There were two types of daric, a gold coin and a silver coin. Only Darius himself could order the minting of gold darics, while silver darics could be minted by important generals and satraps (regional governors). The introduction of both of these coins and their widespread adoption created a boom in international trade for the Persian Empire, with textiles, tools, carpets and metal objects sold en masse. To further aid this trade boost, Darius also created a royal highway, a type of postal and commercial shipping system.

Reportedly, the daric also improved the Persian Empire's governmental revenues also, with new daric-specific taxes on land, livestock and markets created. This increased revenue helped maintain and improve the empire's infrastructure and directly funded Darius' numerous construction projects, including roads, canals and temples.

First Persian invasion
Darius I springs an invasion of mainland Greece, with his general Mardonius taking Thrace and Macedon. Unfortunately, Mardonius' fleet is wrecked in a storm off the coast of Mount Athos, stopping the conquest in its tracks.
492 BCE

Round two
Darius I launches a second campaign against the Greeks two years later under the command of military generals Datis and Artaphernes. While they make some progress, the Persian army suffers a massive defeat at the Battle of Marathon.
490 BCE

Furious in defeat
Darius is angered greatly by the failure of the Greek conquest and after the remnants of his force returns to Persia, he immediately starts preparations for another. Internal strife and power struggles in Persia delay it.
488 BCE

486 BCE

Darius dies
After years of preparation for another invasion of Greece, a revolt against Persian rule breaks out in Egypt, with the toll worsening Darius' health markedly. He dies shortly after and is entombed in a rock-cut sepulchre tomb.
486 BCE

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POLITICAL PIONEERS

The political powerhouses who made a stand and were determined to make the world a better place

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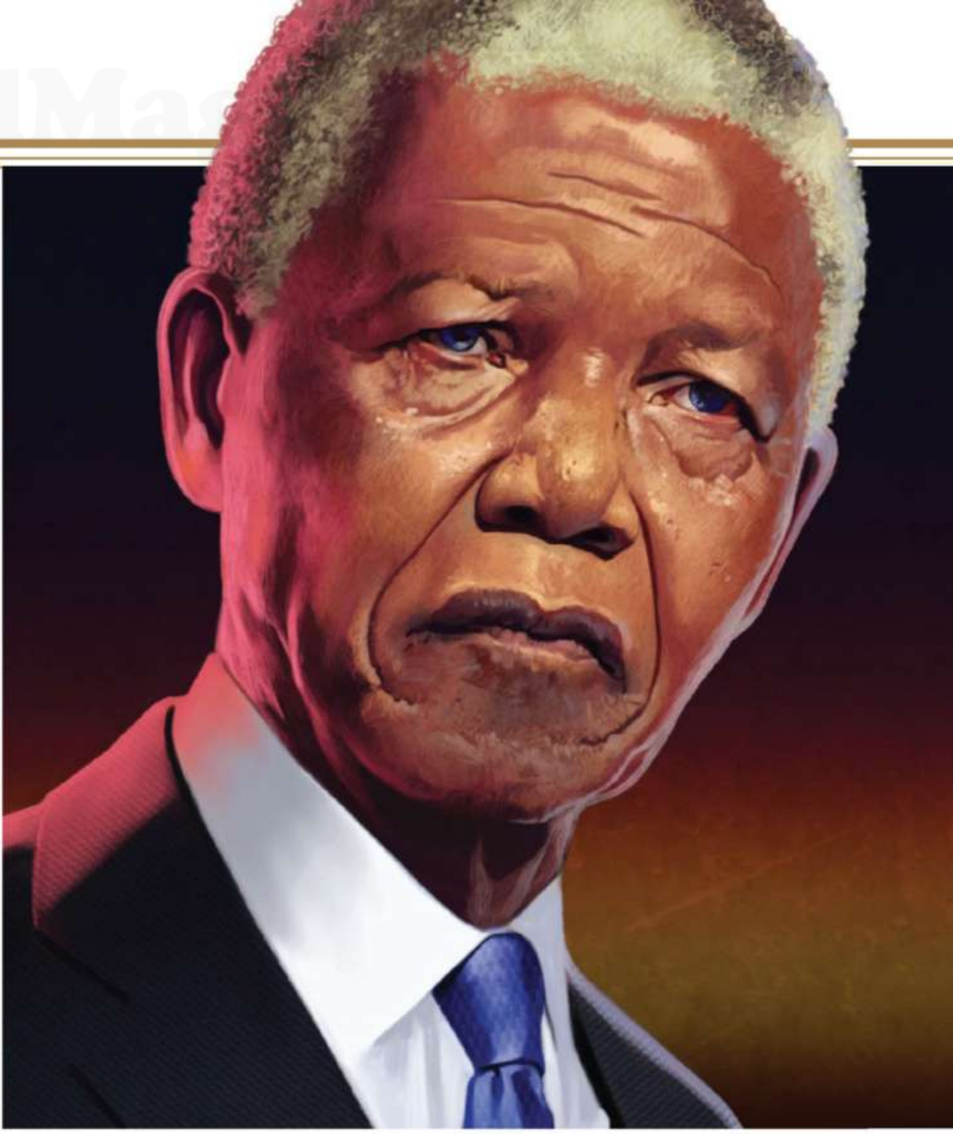


Mandela's Revolution

Before he became a prisoner of conscience and a beloved Nobel laureate, young Nelson Mandela abandoned the ideals of non-violence for a guerilla revolution

On 26 May 1948, roughly one million white South Africans went to the polls to cast ballots in parliamentary elections. Their decision was between the incumbent Union Party, which had thrust South Africans into a wildly unpopular World War II, and an upstart coalition of right-wing nationalists called the Reunited National Party (NP). Although no blacks and few mixed-race South Africans participated in the election, the vote was a naked referendum on race. D F Malan, the NP leader, ran on a platform of institutionalized apartheid or 'apart-hood', an aggressive credo of racial segregation and white dominion. Jan Smuts, the sitting prime minister, fumbled over the 'black question', proposing a series of murky ideas involving racial integration. White Afrikaners, the descendants of Dutch-speaking settlers who fought two bloody land wars with the British, were sick of supporting the Crown and saw the Union Party as the queen's lackeys. It's no accident that apartheid is an Afrikaans word - racial segregation was key to Afrikaner nationalism and its fervent belief in a white state.

Apartheid won the day. The conservative NP joined forces with the ultra-nationalist Afrikaner Party to take an eight-seat majority in parliament and Malan ascended to prime minister. Afrikaners saw the victory as nothing short of a declaration of independence, from Britain and from blacks. "For the first time since Union," declared Malan, "South

The laws that divided a country

Educational apartheid

Education under apartheid was separate and wildly unequal. Under the 1953 Bantu Education Act, schools and universities were labelled either 'white' or 'tribal' and all were put under direct government control. Spending on black schools was one-tenth of that invested in white education, resulting in hundreds of black schools without electricity or running water. National Party leaders saw no need to spend money on an education that black South Africans would never use. A 1974 law forcing black students to learn Afrikaans as well as English was the spark that ignited the 1976 Soweto Uprising that resulted in hundreds of deaths, many of them high school students.

Medical apartheid

From the early days of Dutch and British colonial rule, there were two medical systems in South Africa: one for whites and one for blacks. The segregation of hospitals was so entrenched by 1948 that the National Party didn't need to write it into law; it was already the policy at every public medical facility in the country. When medical facilities were finally integrated in 1990, only 10 per cent of South Africa's five million whites were using public hospitals compared with 90 per cent of the country's 27 million blacks. The result was a huge surplus of beds in white hospitals and dangerous overcrowding in black facilities.

Sexual apartheid

Fears surrounding sexual 'impurity' have always fuelled the argument for segregation of the races. In white South Africa and elsewhere, the black man was portrayed as a deviant sexual animal with an insatiable appetite for white women. The South African parliament passed the Immorality Act in 1927, outlawing sexual relations between whites and blacks with a punishment of five years in jail for men and four years for women. Mixed marriages were banned outright in 1949 and amendments to the Immorality Act in 1950 and 1957 extended the prohibition to all coloured races and increased the jail time to seven years for anyone convicted of 'immoral or indecent acts.'

A young black man, in an act of resistance to apartheid, rides a bus reserved for whites

Nelson Mandela grabs some refreshments during a break in the Treason Trial in Pretoria, 1958

> "Mandela was handsome and unabashedly vain, insisting on the best suits from exclusive white tailors"

Africa is our own." By 1948, the oppression and subjugation of the black majority in South Africa was already a centuries-old story, but the rise of apartheid would further raise the stakes and set the scene for a confrontation between the government and those who believed that their country should be for all – people like Nelson Mandela.

Mandela was speechless when he first heard the election results. The 29-year-old activist and law student had believed that South Africa was on the cusp of a very different kind of change. In America, legal challenges to segregation were being organised and in India Ghandi and his followers had used the tools of non-violent resistance and civil disobedience to overthrow centuries of British rule. Even with the NP in power, Mandela refused to assume the worst from the nationalist regime, but this meant that he initially underestimated the fervour with which the white power structure would clamp down on black freedoms.

Raised in a tiny Xhosa village in the remote Transkei region, Mandela had arrived in the black townships of Johannesburg only seven years before those fateful 1948 elections, a college dropout escaping an arranged marriage. After a brief stint as a night watchman in the mines, Mandela the country boy had the good fortune to meet Walter Sisulu, a young real-estate agent who would grow to become one of Mandela's greatest mentors, supporters and, ultimately, his prison companion. Sisulu got Mandela a job as a clerk in a progressive Johannesburg law firm, one of the few that served both black and white clients and even introduced him to his future wife, when Mandela met his young cousin Evelyn; the couple married in 1944. It was in Sisulu's home in the black suburb of Orlando where Mandela first met the outspoken Zulu activist Anton Lembede, who would recruit the young idealist studying for a law degree and dreaming of his own practice to an organisation that would shape the rest of his life: the African National Congress (ANC).

The ANC was founded in 1912 to unify feuding African tribes in the struggle for black rights in the newly christened Union of South Africa. Decades before apartheid, the small, underfunded organization fought racist laws like the Urban Areas Act of 1923, which forced all black men to carry passbooks proving their identity. Failure to show your pass when entering a white district meant arrest and expulsion from the city. Right from the formation of the ANC there was internal debate over the most effective way to fight for change. In 1919, the ANC supported a militant strike of 70,000 miners north of Johannesburg, which was crushed by police and armed white civilians. In the aftermath, the ANC leadership chose a more diplomatic path, but these efforts were fruitless.

The ANC languished through much of the Twenties and Thirties as a stuffy, ineffective old-boys club. Anton Lembede planned to change all of that. He recruited Mandela and Sisulu to help him found a new youth wing of the ANC, a radically rebooted civil-rights organisation dedicated to the ideals of African nationalism. The group called for taking the fight to the streets in mass demonstrations and coordinated acts of civil disobedience. ANC president Alfred Xuma appreciated the enthusiasm of the young firebrands, but didn't want to scare off his supporters in white society as he was still trying to play the political game.

Despite some resistance from the ANC's old guard, the ANC Youth League officially launched in April 1944 with Lembede as president and Mandela, Sisulu and Oliver Tambo – a brilliant young teacher and organizer that Mandela knew from his school days – on the executive committee. Mandela wasn't a leader yet, just a tall, whip-smart activist swept up in the infectious personality of Lembede, the camaraderie of his friends, and the justness of the cause. The Youth League grew in prominence and influence within the ANC, but Mandela and his ideologue companions weren't the only organisation vying for the minds and hearts of oppressed South Africans. Communists and Indian groups were staging their own strikes and mass actions and recruiting some of the brightest young black activists to their cause. Mandela counted communists and Indians as friends, but fervently opposed any attempt to muddy the clear nationalist agenda of black Africans with 'foreign' ideologies.

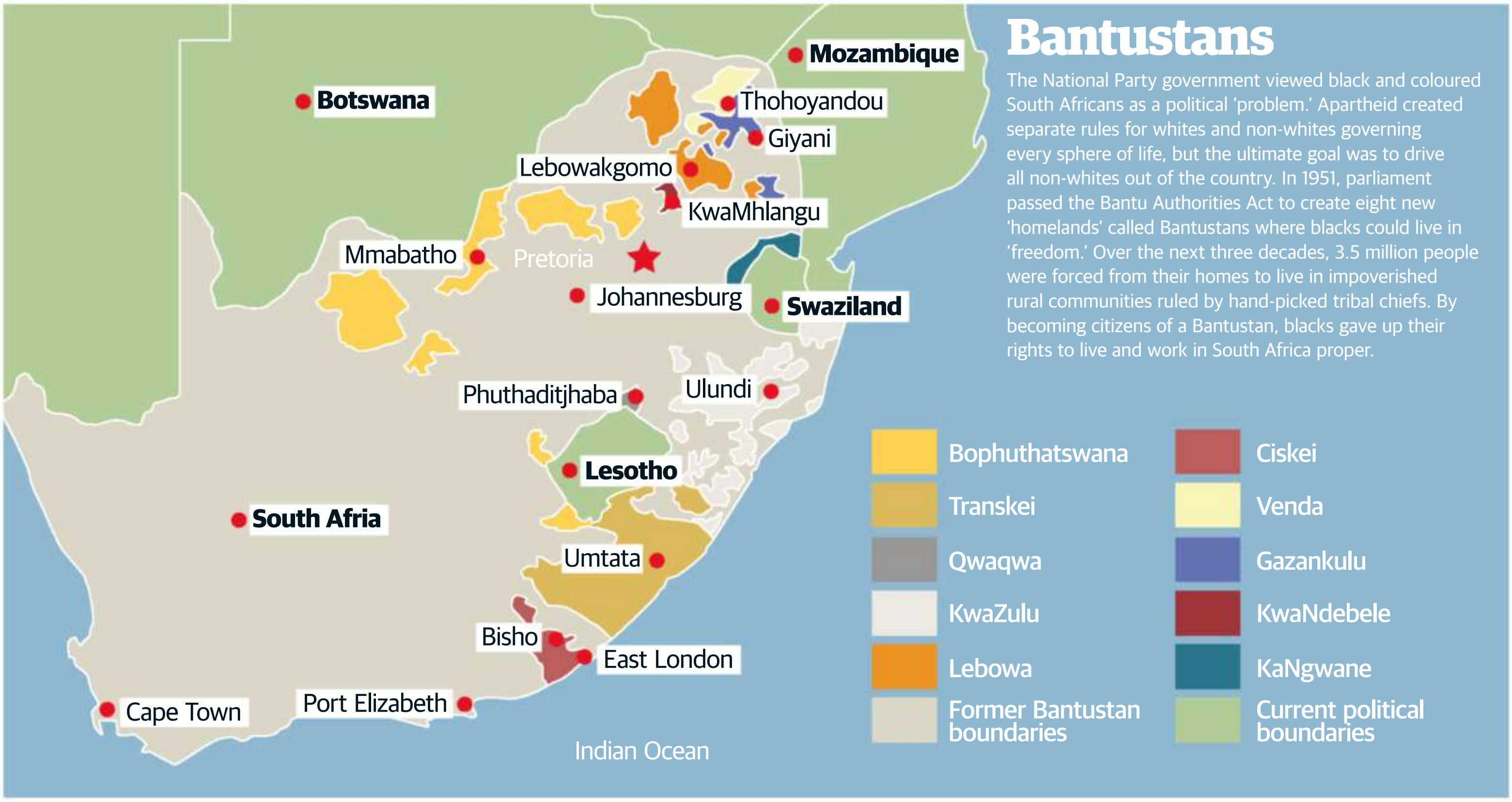
Then came 1948 with Malan and his National Party coalition sweeping to power on a platform of harsh racial segregation. While the Youth League and ANC leaders quibbled over joining forces with rival opposition groups, the NP regime set out to legalise a far-reaching system of institutionalised apartheid. Malan and his ministers set the groundwork for a nationwide system of racial classification. Every citizen would be categorised as white, black, coloured or Indian and required to live and work in racially 'pure' sections of every city.

As the full scope and intensity of apartheid law became clear, Mandela and his Youth Leaguers acted with a new urgency. Together, they drew up plans for an ambitious Programme of Action. Despite the Youth League's resistance to foreign influence, the Programme of Action was inspired by passive resistance campaigns of the Indian Conference in 1946 and mine strikes organised by the communists. The Programme of Action called for an end to passive negotiation with the enemy and the launch of an active resistance campaign using tactics of non-violence, civil disobedience, boycotts and strikes. Mandela and the Youth League were vehement about non-violence as the only viable force of opposition. They knew that any attempt at armed insurgency would be brutally crushed by the regime and pave the way for even harsher apartheid restrictions. Mandela believed that passive resistance could apply the political and moral pressure to topple tyranny.

The annual ANC conference in 1949 marked a dramatic shift from the ANC as an association of old-guard liberalism into a radical revolutionary machine. The Youth Leaguers staged a coup, deposing the staid ANC president Xuma with a no-confidence vote and replacing him with a hand-picked successor. Mandela's good friend Sisulu was elected secretary-general of the revolutionised ANC and Tambo and other Youth Leaguers were called to executive roles. Mandela would soon join them on the ANC's front lines.

Mandela was a staunch critic of apartheid and gave many speeches detailing its injustice

Today's public perception of Mandela is of a patient peacemaker and master strategist who wrought unthinkable concessions from his worst enemies and displayed amazing forgiveness towards them. However, it is worth noting that the Mandela of the late Forties and early Fifties was a mere player in a much larger struggle for black freedom – but that's not to say that he didn't stand out. At 183 centimetres tall (6 feet), he towered over the other black intellectuals, jazz musicians, artists and activists packing the thriving cultural



Bantustans

The National Party government viewed black and coloured South Africans as a political 'problem.' Apartheid created separate rules for whites and non-whites governing every sphere of life, but the ultimate goal was to drive all non-whites out of the country. In 1951, parliament passed the Bantu Authorities Act to create eight new 'homelands' called Bantustans where blacks could live in 'freedom.' Over the next three decades, 3.5 million people were forced from their homes to live in impoverished rural communities ruled by hand-picked tribal chiefs. By becoming citizens of a Bantustan, blacks gave up their rights to live and work in South Africa proper.

Johannesburg district of Orlando West. Mandela was handsome and unabashedly vain, insisting on the best suits from exclusive white tailors. He ran daily and trained as a boxer to improve his strength and physique, which became imposing.

Friends and associates from those early days describe him as supremely confident and charming, but also somewhat distant and aloof. He didn't drink with the other activists in the raucous underground bars called shebeens and spoke with a reserved formality fitting of his chiefly upbringing in the Transkei. But Mandela's polite formality belied an innate fearlessness. The same fearless streak that drew him into the boxing ring would suit Mandela well during the increasingly heated opposition to the apartheid regime.

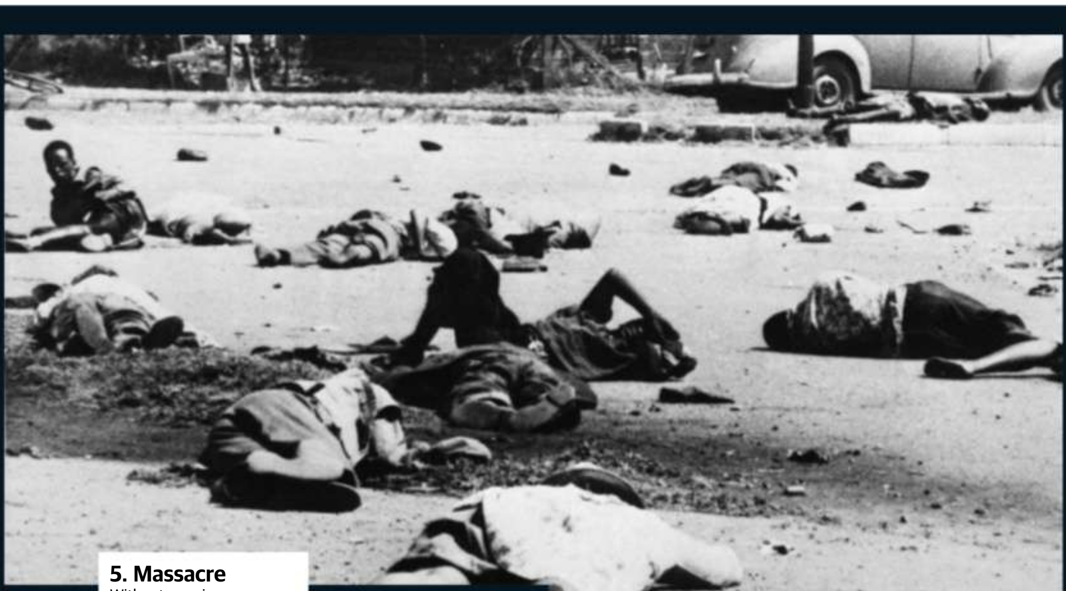
In 1951, Mandela was elected national president of the Youth League, his first taste of real power. At the ANC convention, Mandela's friend Sisulu, still the secretary-general, proposed a non-violent Defiance Campaign against the flood of oppressive race laws. The ANC would demand that the government repeal certain laws that made black South Africans feel like prisoners in their own country. When the regime refused, they would take to the streets in mass actions of passive resistance and civil disobedience. By this point, both Mandela and the larger ANC had abandoned their fierce African nationalism and embraced the idea of a united front against apartheid that included a coalition of leading communist and Indian opposition groups. When Mandela spoke of South Africa's future, he spoke of freedom for all "non-European" people, not just the black majority.

Mandela had high expectations for the Defiance Campaign and offered to serve as Volunteer-in-Chief. In this role, he travelled for months across black South Africa, knocking on doors and giving speeches to rally the masses to powerful acts of civil disobedience. The plan was simple; to organise groups of people to peacefully violate minor apartheid laws like curfew, get arrested and clog the prisons with the cause. The Defiance Campaign lasted six months, during which more than 8,000 people were arrested and jailed for non-violent acts of civil disobedience. Getting arrested became a badge of honour. Membership in the ANC exploded and Mandela was awarded much of the credit for the best-organised and most effective campaign in ANC history. His standing continued to grow.

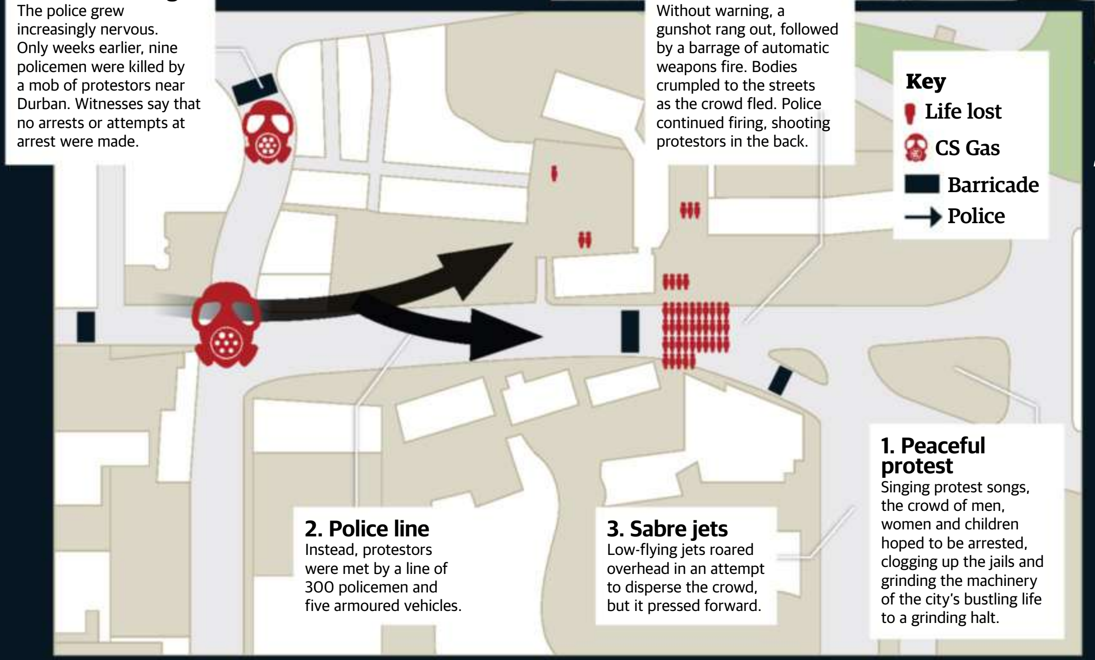
However, the celebrations were short-lived. The National Party responded to the insolence of the opposition with mass arrests – Mandela included – on charges of 'communism'. Found guilty, the men received a suspended sentence of nine months of hard labour, which they never served. However, the government imposed strict bans on Mandela and 51 other ANC leaders. They were forbidden to attend meetings with more than one person or even leave Johannesburg without police permission. Meanwhile, parliament passed new laws against deliberate lawbreaking carrying sentences of years in prison and even flogging - a

The Sharpeville Massacre

The passbook was one of the most hated signs of white rule in apartheid-era South Africa, with all black people required to carry and present the ID to authorities. The ANC decided to hold a mass demonstration against the pass on 31 March 1961, but a splinter group called the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) wanted to steal the ANC's thunder. The PAC hastily organized its own non-violent anti-pass demonstration on 21 March, calling for supporters to leave their passbooks at home and march on police stations to be arrested en masse. The PAC was less influential than the ANC, but organisers went door-to-door on the morning of 21 March, conscripting people to join the cause. By midday, a crowd of roughly 5,000 demonstrators marched on the Sharpeville police station south of Johannesburg.



The aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre in which 69 people lost their lives



4. Tension rising
The police grew increasingly nervous. Only weeks earlier, nine policemen were killed by a mob of protestors near Durban. Witnesses say that no arrests or attempts at arrest were made.

5. Massacre
Without warning, a gunshot rang out, followed by a barrage of automatic weapons fire. Bodies crumpled to the streets as the crowd fled. Police continued firing, shooting protestors in the back.

1. Peaceful protest
Singing protest songs, the crowd of men, women and children hoped to be arrested, clogging up the jails and grinding the machinery of the city's bustling life to a grinding halt.

2. Police line
Instead, protestors were met by a line of 300 policemen and five armoured vehicles.

3. Sabre jets
Low-flying jets roared overhead in an attempt to disperse the crowd, but it pressed forward.

> "By midday a crowd of 5,000 demonstrators marched on the Sharpeville police station south of Johannesburg"

Aftermath

Sixty-nine people were killed at Sharpeville and 180 wounded. Rather than admit fault, the government banned public gatherings, outlawed both the PAC and ANC, and passed a law that indemnified all police from civil lawsuits. In 1996, Mandela chose Sharpeville as the site to announce the signing of South Africa's first democratic constitution, and in 2012, work was completed on a memorial garden that contains the names of all who lost their lives.

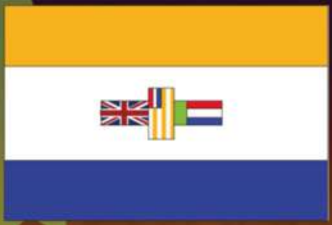
Key players in the battle for South Africa

Oliver Tambo

Oliver Tambo was a lifelong leader of the ANC and one of Mandela's most loyal partners in the fight against apartheid. With Mandela, Tambo helped found the ANC Youth League and create the 1949 Programme of Action that transformed the ANC from an isolated political organisation into a radical liberation movement. Tambo and Mandela founded a law firm to advocate for the poor and were arrested countless times for staging protests and breaking apartheid laws. After the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, Tambo and the ANC went into exile, forging key partnerships with other African nations. Tambo headed for London to mobilise opposition to apartheid. He lived there until he retuned to South Africa in 1991, to attend the first ANC national conference inside South Africa in three decades, where he was elected National Chairperson. He died from a stroke in 1993.

Daniel Francois Malan

DF Malan was a leading figure in the National Party's rise to power in South African politics and a founding father of apartheid. An Afrikaner, Malan fought hard for the rights of white South Africans, both against the remnants of Dutch and British colonial rule and the black 'natives.' Malan was the first editor of *Die Burger*, the NP newspaper, and held high government posts when the party seized power in the Twenties. Malan defected to form his own 'purified' nationalist party, campaigning on a platform of institutionalised apartheid in 1948, winning 86 of the 150 seats in parliament. During his six and a half years as prime minister Malan passed numerous apartheid laws and when he eventually retired in 1954, aged 80, apartheid had been firmly established and his successors carried on down the same path.



Joe Slovo

The Jewish communist was a close ally of Mandela and a commanding officer in the Spear of the Nation. Slovo first met Mandela at Wits University, when a young Mandela wanted nothing to do with communists and other 'foreign' influences. The two ended up fierce allies in the fight of 'the people' against the oppressive rule of apartheid. Both men were repeatedly arrested and banned from public appearances and went underground to plan acts of sabotage against the regime. When Mandela was imprisoned, Slovo went into exile in Britain and elsewhere, returning in 1990 to negotiate an end to apartheid.

Hendrik Verwoerd

Known as the chief architect of apartheid, HF Verwoerd served as minister of native affairs under Malan and eventually as the seventh prime minister of South Africa. As minister of native affairs, Verwoerd was instrumental in crafting the most insidious apartheid laws, including the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and the Pass Laws Act. As prime minister, he engineered the forced relocation of blacks in 'homelands' and the reclassification of white South Africa as its own Republic. After surviving two bullets to the face in 1960, Verwoerd was fatally stabbed six years later.

punishment that illustrated just how archaic the government was.

The bans effectively sidelined Mandela from active involvement in the ANC for the next two years and he fell back on his day job. Somehow, while dedicating countless hours to the Youth League, Mandela managed to earn his law degree. In August 1952, together with Oliver Tambo, Mandela rented a cramped space in downtown Johannesburg and opened the law offices of Mandela & Tambo, the first and only black law partnership in South Africa. The pair swapped fighting the cruelties and absurdities of apartheid from the streets to the courts.

The stairs leading to their office were packed day and night with poor Africans desperate for an advocate against unjust laws. As Mandela recounts in his autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom: "…it was a crime to walk through a Whites Only door, a crime to ride a Whites Only bus, a crime to use a Whites Only drinking fountain, a crime to walk on a Whites Only beach, a crime to be on the streets past eleven, a crime not to have a pass book and a crime to have the wrong signature in that book, a crime to be unemployed and a crime to be employed in the wrong place, a crime to live in certain places and a crime to have no place to live."

Mandela proved a capable and charismatic courthouse lawyer, while Tambo handled the legal research. With his tailored suits, imposing physical stature and handsome grin, Mandela the crusading lawyer earned a celebrity following in black Johannesburg and an army of enemies in the white establishment. He was routinely followed by plainclothes government security officers and barred from leaving Johannesburg for important cases. Despite Mandela and Tambo's pioneering legal work, the police state was hugely effective at smothering organised opposition. Isolated from other banned ANC leaders, Mandela feared an all-out ban on its existence. The ANC, he decided, needed to have a plan to go underground. In 1953, Mandela crafted the so-called 'M-Plan' that called for an underground network of secret ANC cells across South Africa. While the M-Plan was never implemented, it set the groundwork for the not-too-distant day when Mandela and his freedom fighters would be driven into the shadows.

When Malan's National Party strengthened its position in parliament in the 1953 general election it became clear that the United Party were failing to propose a viable alternative to apartheid. The ANC called for all enemies of apartheid, regardless of race or creed or political ideology, to convene in a massive Congress of the People. The mission of this Congress was to produce a Freedom Charter, a 'constitution' that called for racial equality and liberty in South Africa. The Congress met in 1955 with Mandela in secret attendance.

As the Freedom Charter was read in three languages, approving cries of "Afrika!" reverberated from the 3,000 delegates in attendance. However, on the second day of meetings, armed Afrikaner detectives raided the meeting hall and seized the microphone, telling all in attendance that they were part of an investigation into acts of treason. Most in the ANC dismissed this as a publicity stunt and few took the investigation seriously. However, early on a December morning in 1956 Mandela awoke to the banging of fists on his door and was met with three white policemen with a warrant for his arrest on charges of high treason. It wasn't an isolated event.

Mandela's Prisons

1. Robben Island 1962-1982

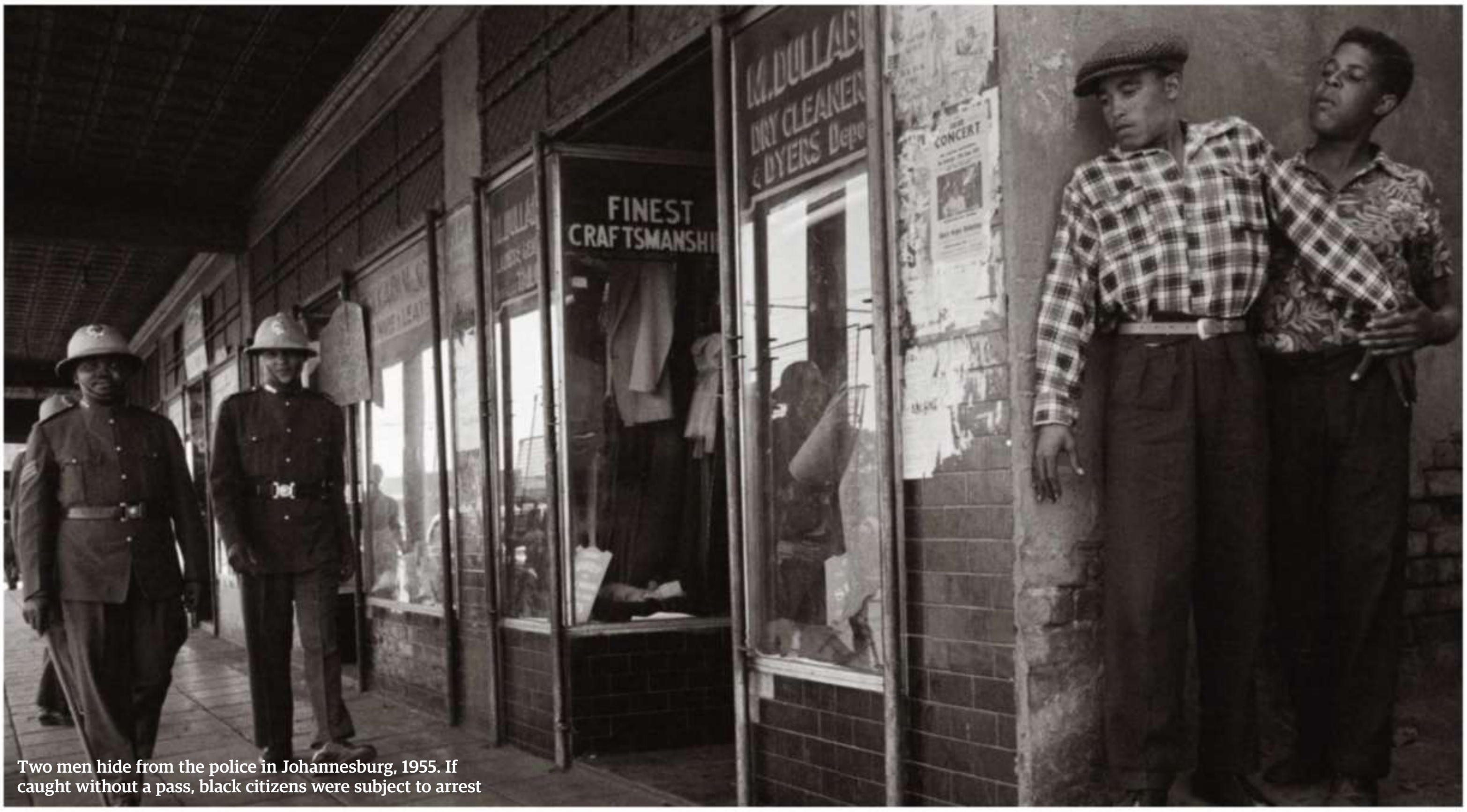
For 18 excruciating years, Mandela slept on a thin straw mat on the concrete floor of a bare cell measuring 2.1 by 2.4 meters (7 by 8 feet). After the Rivonia trial, where Mandela and nine ANC compatriots were found guilty of sabotage, the men were flown to Robben Island, a remote prison for political enemies and common criminals since the mid-16th century. For the first year, Mandela was woken at 5:30am, given a bucket of cold water to wash, fed a breakfast of corn mush and led into the courtyard, where he would spend all day — with breaks for two more bowls of mush and grisly meat — hammering stone into gravel. Conversation was forbidden, but Mandela was allowed to read law texts at night before retiring under the perpetual blaze of a naked 40-watt bulb. In 1965, Mandela began labouring in the lime quarry in the relentless heat of summer and the bone-chilling cold of winter. The burning glare from the quarry walls damaged his eyesight.

2. Pollsmoor Prison 1982-1988

Despite the backbreaking labour and wretched conditions on Robben Island, Mandela was initially disappointed to be transferred to the modern mainland fortress of Pollsmoor Prison. During his 18 years on the island, Mandela had formed deep friendships with fellow prisoners and guards and missed the fresh air and camaraderie denied by the steel doors and closed quarters of Pollsmoor. But there were major improvements, too. Mandela was transferred to Pollsmoor with three close friends, including Walter Sisulu, and the four lived in a shared cell with a separate reading room and even a television. Eventually, the men were allowed to spend a portion of each day on a rooftop, where Mandela convinced the warden to give him steel drums and soil to plant a vegetable garden.

3. Victor Verster Prison 1988-1990

Arriving at Pollsmoor, Mandela complained about the prison's damp conditions. By 1988 he was regularly suffering coughing fits and unexplained vomiting. Transferred to a whites-only hospital and housed on his own floor, Mandela underwent an emergency operation to remove dark fluid from his lungs, an early sign of tuberculosis. Fearing that Mandela would become a worldwide martyr for the anti-apartheid cause if he was to die in prison and the news coverage it would cause, the authorities allowed him to recuperate in an expensive private hospital. Then, instead of shipping him back to Pollsmoor, the regime transferred Mandela to the low-security Victor Verster Prison outside Cape Town. The conditions were vastly different to those he had experienced since 1962. Mandela wasn't confined to a cell, but given one of the guard's private cottages which afforded him much more space than he was used to. Still, even though it had all the trappings of home, nothing could hide the fact that his cottage was still a prison. Gratefully, it would be his last.



Two men hide from the police in Johannesburg, 1955. If caught without a pass, black citizens were subject to arrest

> "The government tried to paint the accused as communist plotters aiming to topple the regime through violent uprising"

Over 155 ANC leaders and Congress attendees of all races were rounded up, arrested, and held for two weeks before the infamous Treason Trial began.

Using more than 12,000 documents collected during a three-year investigation, including snippets of public speeches and the text of the Freedom Charter itself, the government tried to paint the accused as communist plotters aiming to topple the regime through violent uprising. The trial was rife with incompetent testimony and flimsy evidence, ultimately failing to convict Mandela and his co-defendants, but the criminal proceedings stretched on for an interminable five years and the ANC directed much of its efforts to raising money for their defence.

Early in the Treason Trial, Mandela returned home from the courtroom to find that his personal life was also in turmoil as Evelyn, his wife and mother of his two young children, had left. Soon after the divorce, Mandela fell in love with a charming 22-year-old social worker named Winnie Nomzamo Madikizela. Sixteen years younger than Mandela, Winnie was exceptionally bright — the first black social worker hired at Baragwanath Hospital — and fascinated by fashion, not politics. She was smitten by Mandela the handsome lawyer, not Mandela the political firebrand. Winnie, who also grew up in the Transkei, was in awe of Mandela's chiefly carriage. Despite objections from Winnie's family the two married in 1958 during a break in the Treason Trial. Unlike Evelyn, Winnie would eventually be drawn deeply to politics and earn her own fame and controversy.

In 1958, Hendrik Verwoerd, minister of native affairs under Malan and proud architect of apartheid, took over as prime minister and parliament passed the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act in 1959, which aimed to drive blacks entirely out of white South Africa. As this move to further segregate the country played out, the Treason Trial involving Mandela and other ANC leaders droned on and ideological rifts in the ANC - never far from the surface - broke out between those who saw black statehood as the ultimate goal and those who believed in a free and equal South Africa for all. This eventually led to leading Africanist Robert Sobukwe splitting from the ANC to form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1959. The rivalry between the two opposition groups would lead to the hasty organisation of a PAC-sponsored protest march in Sharpeville, a Johannesburg suburb, in 1960, which ended in the police massacre of unarmed black protestors.

The Sharpeville Massacre brought the simmering conflict between the NP regime and the black opposition to a boiling point. Expecting an outpouring of anger against the killings, Verwoerd took the offensive, issuing a State of Emergency and detaining 18,000 people deemed enemies of the state. In the process, both the ANC and PAC were banned outright. If there was ever a time to implement Mandela's M-Plan and go underground, this was it, but with 2,000 ANC leaders among the detained, there was too much confusion.

The Treason Trial finally ended in March 1961 with all charges dropped against Mandela and the 29 others accused. Faced with the constant threat of bans, arrests and more trumped-up charges, Mandela decided that he would be most effective to the cause by going underground. After a tearful goodbye with Winnie, he left his home and family and entered one of the darkest and most transformative phases of his life. Moving from safehouse to safehouse, Mandela put all of his efforts into organising a peaceful, three-day stay-at-home strike and arranged secret meetings with the South African press, who began to recognise him as the unofficial mouthpiece of the underground revolution. When the day of the strike arrived, however, the regime responded with an impressive military show of force. Crushed, Mandela cancelled the strike after a single day.

Soon after this the despondent 43-year-old was interviewed by a journalist and warned: "If the government is to crush by force our non-violent demonstrations, we will have to seriously reconsider our tactics. In my mind, we are closing a chapter on this question of non-violent policy."

For Mandela, the struggle for a free South Africa was no longer political; it was a matter of life and

Nelson Mandela emerges from the court after his acquittal in the Treason Trial

> "For Mandela, the struggle for a free South Africa was no longer political: it was a matter of life and death"

death. If the regime was going to respond to strikes and protests with bayonets and machine guns, the opposition had a simple choice: take arms or die. Non-violence alone had reached its limits. White South Africa would need to be blasted out of its complacency. With a warrant out for his arrest, Mandela was branded as an outlaw, a label he wore with pride. From his safehouse he embraced his newfound militancy with a lawyer's zeal. He read every book he could find on armed revolution and guerrilla warfare but despite his change in attitude the practicalities were different; Mandela had never held a gun, let alone fired one.

Mandela's new militancy reflected other parts of the nation. By 1961, the PAC already had its own militant squad, as did the communists. Mandela was adamant that the time was ripe to organize a militant wing of the ANC. Publicly, the ANC would admit no ties to the guerilla organisation, but the armed rebels would act in accordance with ANC leadership to achieve strategic political goals. Mandela the amateur military commander was now in charge of the ANC's fledgling sabotage squad, Umkhonto we Sizwe or 'Spear of the Nation,' best known by the initials MK.

Mandela recruited Walter Sisulu and their white communist friend Joe Slovo as joint commanders of MK. The communists were crucial to the MK's success, since many of them had fought in WWII and had experience with guns and explosives. Wolfie Kodesh, another white communist ally, remembers accompanying Mandela on their first bomb test. Deep inside a Johannesburg brickworks, the men gingerly detonated a homemade canister bomb built by an experienced 'desert rat' named Jack Hodgson. After a misfire, the force of the explosion produced a mushroom cloud of dust. Convinced they would be caught by police, Mandela and Kodesh sped away in their '48 Chevy, giggling like schoolboys.

The first act of sabotage personally planned by commanders Mandela, Slovo and Sisulu occurred on 16 December 1961. The ragtag group of MK foot soldiers still knew very little about military tactics, but were anxious to make their presence felt. They vowed not to kill anybody, if possible, but to target the most visible institutions of apartheid. In three separate bombing attacks, MK targeted government offices across the country. The only casualty was one of the saboteurs, and the attacks did little to strike fear in the white populace, but Mandela thought it was a tremendous success.

The regime condemned the MK as communist terrorists and Mandela the activist lawyer was now effectively an underground rebel commander. With a price on his head, he went deeper into hiding, favouring a remote farm called Lilliesleaf in the Johannesburg suburb of Rivonia. When he travelled to meet ANC leaders and Winnie, he did so in disguise, sometimes as a chauffeur, a night watchman or a mechanic. The swooning press dubbed him the 'Black Pimpernel.'

With the blessing of the banned ANC leadership, Mandela slipped out of South Africa in late 1961 to garner support for the armed struggle. He received a hero's welcome at the Pan-African Freedom Conference in Ethiopia. In London, Tambo begged Mandela to stay there or travel to America, but he was insistent that he wanted to face his enemy head on. Mandela was as good as his word and returned to Africa to attend an intensive six-month military training camp in Ethiopia where he handled a pistol and automatic rifle for the first time and learned to make explosives.

While Mandela was away, back in South Africa, the PAC military wing had begun to assassinate whites out of retaliation for government crackdowns, something Mandela and the MK had vowed never to do. In response, the parliament passed the Sabotage Act in 1962, making any act of political sabotage, no matter how petty, a capital crime. Mandela knew that a return to South Africa meant almost certain arrest or even death, but he made little effort to disguise his identity when he crossed the border, wearing only military khakis and a patchy beard of a Sixties revolutionary.

As he must have known would happen, on 5 August 1962, Mandela's transport from Durban to Johannesburg was overtaken by police and he was arrested and charged with incitement to strike and leaving the country without a passport. In one of the most memorable and theatrical moments of his public life, he appeared in the Pretoria courthouse bare-chested wearing his native Xhosa garb, a leopard-skin kaross draped over one shoulder.

Mandela boxing on a Johannesburg rooftop during a break at the Treason Trial in 1957

Jubilant scenes at Mandela's first ANC rally after his release

Mandela with Congolese politician Emmanuel Dungia in 1997

Road to freedom: Why Mandela was freed

FREE
MANDELA

FreedomFest 11 June 1988

In 1988 more than a billion people worldwide tuned in to watch a star-studded 11-hour concert celebrating Mandela's seventieth birthday. Live acts included some of the biggest pop stars of the day and several prominent African musicians. Promoter Tony Hollingsworth and the British Anti-Apartheid Movement spearheaded the organisation of the event at London's Wembley Stadium, which proved a logistical and political nightmare. At first, musicians refused to commit unless the bill was stuffed with A-list acts. Once the acts were booked, Hollingsworth had to negotiate between ANC leaders demanding a politically-charged event and Western broadcasters who wanted to strip the concert of any overtly anti-apartheid messaging. In the end, the concert was promoted as a pro-freedom rally celebrating Mandela's birthday, but political speeches were banned. With violent clashes on the news, the viewers clearly understood the political significance of the concert. The event helped bring the anti-apartheid movement into the world's living rooms.

Internal resistance to apartheid Seventies and Eighties

For South Africans, Mandela's imprisonment was symbolic of the larger oppression and subjugation of blacks under apartheid. As Mandela rose to prominence as a prisoner of conscience, his name and image were invoked by organisations intent on toppling the racist regime. Student groups like the South African Students' Movement were some of the first to stage mass protests and strikes like the Soweto Uprising of 1976, in which police shot 23 students dead in a mass revolt against the decree that black students learn Afrikaans in school. Labour unions were another force of internal resistance, particularly after black trade unions were legalised in 1979. Unions could effectively fill the vacuum left by banned political organisations and since unions met inside factory walls, they were immune to public meeting laws. Churches and religious coalitions were another powerful anti-apartheid force. Anglican bishop Desmond Tutu led the outcry as secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches, helping to earn him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his international call to conscience. Some white South Africans also rallied against apartheid. In parliamentary elections during the Seventies and Eighties, 15 to 20 per cent of whites voted for the Progressive Party, the only South African political party opposing apartheid.

While Mandela was imprisoned

1966

Assassination of Verwoerd
Prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid, is assassinated in the House of Assembly by an enraged parliamentary messenger. His National Party successors would gradually soften the regime's vice-like grip on power.
6 September 1966

Soweto Uprising
20,000 students take to the streets to protest the obligatory use of Afrikaans in classroom instruction alongside English. Heavily armed riot police kill hundreds, mostly teenagers. In the aftermath, the ANC rises to power as a student-organising group.
16 June 1976

Release Mandela campaign
ANC president Oliver Tambo, still in exile, launches an international campaign to free Mandela. The *Sunday Post* of Johannesburg circulates a public petition for his release, which is signed by dozens of South African opposition groups.
9 March 1980

Release of first political prisoner
Breyten Breytenbach, a white anti-apartheid activist convicted of treason, is released early from his life sentence after a massive international campaign. The Botha government starts to quietly reassess its strict policy on political prisoners.
2 December 1982

Kennedy visit
U.S. senator Edward Kennedy, brother of JFK and RFK, visits South Africa and meets with anti-apartheid leaders like Winnie Mandela and Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient in 1984.
January 1985

Coetsee meets Mandela
Minister of justice Kobie Coetsee appears at Mandela's hospital bed while the imprisoned leader recovers from prostate surgery. Together, they begin to forge a compromise by which the ANC would retreat from violence in exchange for relaxing apartheid laws.
15 August 1985

Economic sanctions 1986

The United Nations were an early and vocal opponent of apartheid and in 1963 called on all member states to stop shipments of arms, ammunition and military vehicles. However, calls for further economic sanctions met resistance, particularly from the US and UK, which held longstanding political and economic ties with the ruling regime. British prime minister Margaret Thatcher labelled the ANC and its supporters "terrorists." The Eighties saw increased TV news coverage of apartheid resistance, and many US corporations, colleges and universities pulled investments. The most devastating economic blow came when the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1986. President Ronald Reagan claimed they hurt the very people the US was trying to help and vetoed the bill, but the Congress voted to override his decision. The South African economy lost hundreds of millions of pounds each year in global investment until sanctions were repealed in 1991.

F W de Klerk 2 February 1990

In his first address to parliament after assuming the presidency de Klerk shocked his supporters and critics by unbanning the ANC and other opposition groups and announcing the imminent release of Mandela from prison. De Klerk was an unlikely ally for the ANC. Born to National Party royalty he rose to prominence as an old-school Afrikaner politician but ultimately came to see apartheid as an unsustainable solution. De Klerk initially supported the Bantustan campaigns to relocate blacks to 'native' homelands, but admitted that whites made a mistake by retaining too much land. As sanctions mounted and shifting global politics threatened to further isolate the country economically, he decided that the only way to save his country was to transition to an open democratic society. In negotiations with Mandela, before and after his release, de Klerk fought hard against the socialist-communist factions within the ANC and won support for a free-market economic policy. In 1993 he shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Mandela for his role in ending apartheid.

MANDELA
THE WORLD
IS WITH YOU

A crowd of demonstrators calling for the release of Nelson Mandela from prison

> "Mandela was as good as his word and returned to Africa to attend an intensive six-month military training camp"

Mandela freely admitted to his crimes, but used the platform to deliver an hour-long speech justifying his actions in the name of revolutionary democracy. He was found guilty and sentenced to five years of imprisonment, at the time the harshest sentence handed down for a political offence in South Africa. After six months in Pretoria prison, Mandela was transferred to Robben Island. While serving his sentence of hard labour there, police investigators hunted down his MK co-conspirators at the farm hideout in Rivonia. The careless revolutionaries, Mandela included, had left a treasure trove of documents implicating themselves in the planning and execution of acts of sabotage and guerilla warfare against the regime.

Mandela was transferred from the Robben Island prison back to the same Pretoria courtroom in October 1963 to face capital charges related to 221 acts of sabotage. He was joined in the Rivonia Trial by Sisulu and nine other MK members. The evidence against the saboteurs was overwhelming, but the most damning testimony came from Bruno Mtolo, a former saboteur who struck a plea deal with the prosecution and recounted detailed conversations with Mandela and his co-conspirators in the MK.

In lieu of a defence strategy, Mandela delivered one of the most famous speeches of his life. Mandela's 'Speech from the Dock' lasted four unbroken hours, detailing his beatific life in the Transkei, the blind nationalism of his early activism, his evolution to all-inclusive opposition, and his ultimate abandonment of the principles of non-violence in the face of brutal oppression.

Mandela famously concluded his speech with the following words: "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal, which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." Mandela did not ultimately die for that ideal, but he would lose the next 27 years of his life to imprisonment because of it before he could take his first faltering steps as a free man. His steps may have been shaky, but he was walking out to a South Africa that was on the cusp of a seismic change, and a change that would see him at its very heart.

US sanctions
After a delegation of 13 US congressmen is denied permission to visit Mandela, the Senate passes a comprehensive sanctions bill aimed at crippling the South African economy. President Reagan tries to veto it, but is overruled.
July 1986

Mandela's mentor freed
The new president of South Africa, de Klerk, releases Mandela's political mentor, Walter Sisulu, and seven other prominent Robben Island prisoners a month after succeeding Botha. Their release is a clear sign that the South African government realises the current situation in their country is untenable and that the ANC has to be allowed to reenter the political system.
October 1989

1990

Mandela has tea with Botha
The world's most famous prisoner is snuck through the back door of the president's residence for tea and conversation. Botha serves Mandela, a remarkable gesture in apartheid South Africa, and the path to peace is begun.
5 July 1989

De Klerk lifts ban on the ANC
After months of secret negotiations with Mandela, president de Klerk addresses parliament and calls for the immediate lifting of the ban on the ANC, an end to the state of emergency and the release of Nelson Mandela.
2 February 1990

Mandela released from prison
11 February 1990

By 4pm, thousands of ecstatic supporters packed the small plaza outside of Victor Verster prison where Mandela had been kept since 1988. The crowd were there to catch a glimpse of their 'king,' but few even knew what he looked like anymore. The 71-year-old Mandela hadn't had a photo taken in 27 years and this unknown quality has added to his legend. Then, a tall, stately figure with salt-and-pepper hair, wearing a prim grey suit, stepped through the prison gates and into the blazing South African summer sun. At first, Mandela looked overwhelmed; after nearly three decades in solitude, he was thrust into the spotlight, watched by millions the world over. Then with one hand clasped in Winnie's, Mandela raised a fist into the air in a defiant and proud ANC salute. The crowd roared, Mandela smiled, and the prisoner took his first steps on a journey to becoming South Africa's first black president.

© Corbis; Alamy; Getty; Mary Evans

The Making of Churchill

For five years Winston Churchill stood as a beacon of freedom in the darkest days of World War II. Discover how this unlikely champion picked up the skills to take on his Axis foes

In the blustery summer of 1940, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill gazed across to the distant shores of continental Europe, where the Nazi war machine had brought down Europe's great democracies, and said, "No more." Britain was battered and bruised, the Commonwealth and Empire stretched to breaking point, and a humiliated rag-tag of defeated armies pulled from the burning wreckage of conquered states stood in opposition to a nigh-on-unstoppable totalitarian Axis of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan. Standing tall against this, Churchill was as powerful and enduring a symbol of the free world's defiance as the leonine roar of the Spitfires above the green patchwork of southern England.

That they were fighting on was testament to Churchill's abilities as a leader – he cajoled and convinced, bullied and hectored and played the rousing symphony of public opinion like a master conductor. Even the British establishment, panicked by the fall of France in June 1940 into contemplating surrender, needed to be picked up, dusted down and pushed back into the fight, and Churchill proved to be the perfect man for the job. The former Prime Minister is widely regarded as one of the 20th century's defining world leaders, yet Churchill's legacy hinges almost entirely on his performance during World War II. However, in truth, every great decision he made between 1940 and 1945 had already been foreshadowed by a long, distinguished and even chequered career that saw him influence the tide of history from the ministries of the British state, the back benches of the Commons, the officer's saddle and even the pages of the national press.

Britain's WWII leader was born in 1874, the son of Lord Randolph Churchill, a larger-than-life parliamentary figure in his own right who became Secretary of State for India, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons by the time Winston was 12. Their relationship was distant, with Winston recalling later in life that they hardly spoke, but they shared many of the same qualities. Both men had a reputation for fantastic oration with Randolph's childhood friend Lord Rosebery remarking, "His wit, his sarcasm, his piercing personalities, his elaborate irony, and his effective delivery, gave astonishing popularity to his speeches." They also shared radical mood swings, a driven work ethic and a taste for alcohol. Lord Randolph's death in 1895, aged 45, instilled in his 21-year-old son a fear that he too would die young, adding to his ambition and enduring reputation as 'a young man in a hurry.'

Winston spent four of the first six years of his life in Dublin where his grandfather, John Spencer-

Churchill, was the Lord Lieutenant – effectively the monarch's representative in the then British-ruled Ireland. This is where the bulldog-to-be may have first found himself fascinated by troops, as he watched them parade outside his window. Lord Randolph would later prove a fierce opponent of any sniff of Irish nationalism, coining the slogan, 'Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right' beloved of the Protestant Unionists in Northern Ireland. In 1914, as Britain attempted to sooth the nationalists in the run up to WWI, Churchill would campaign vociferously in favour of the Home Rule Bill – using his role as First Lord of the Admiralty to order a squadron of battleships to Belfast as a threat to the mobilising Protestant paramilitaries, the Ulster Volunteers.

This was arguably the first time that Churchill's now-legendary immobility and refusal to compromise – which would be an enormous benefit during WWII – came into play. The government opted to negotiate, rescinding Churchill's order and entering a dialogue that would in 1914 lead to the partition of Ireland. This sort of compromise was anathema to Churchill, foreshadowing his dogged criticism of appeasement of Nazi Germany in 1937, his brutal response to the general strike in 1926, his dispatch of the infamous Black And Tans to Ireland and his belligerent denial of the Indian independence movement under Mahatma Gandhi. Churchill outlined his stance in his memoirs, writing, "I have always urged fighting wars and other contentions with might and main till overwhelming victory and then extending the hand of friendship to the vanquished... I thought we should have conquered the Irish then given them Home Rule, and that after smashing the General Strike we should have met the grievances of the miners."

As a blue blood growing up in the shadow of the British Empire, Winston Churchill seemed destined for the military, and with his poor academic record, it was one of the only viable routes available to him. The entrance exams for officer cadets at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst were considerably less trying that those of an Oxbridge undergraduate, and Churchill soon found himself a young officer in the 4th Queen's Own Hussars, fighting to enforce the will of the Empire across territories like South Africa, India and Sudan. Using his family connections, he secured postings in the most dramatic conflict zones of the day, earning extra money and building his public image through journalism with a view to "Return with two more decorations... and beat my sword into an iron dispatch box."

Churchill's war reporting was particularly jingoistic, and spoke loudly of his view of Britain's place in the world and of his attitudes to the Empire. "The British army had never fired on white troops since the Crimea, and now that the world was growing so sensible and pacific – and so democratic too – the great days were over," he wrote. "Luckily, however, there were still savages and barbarous peoples. There were Zulus and

Churchill gives his final address during the 1945 election campaign

"Churchill genuinely believed in the British Empire as a civilising force that would bring cricket, decency and the English language"

War on communism

How Churchill's Russian folly made an enemy of Stalin

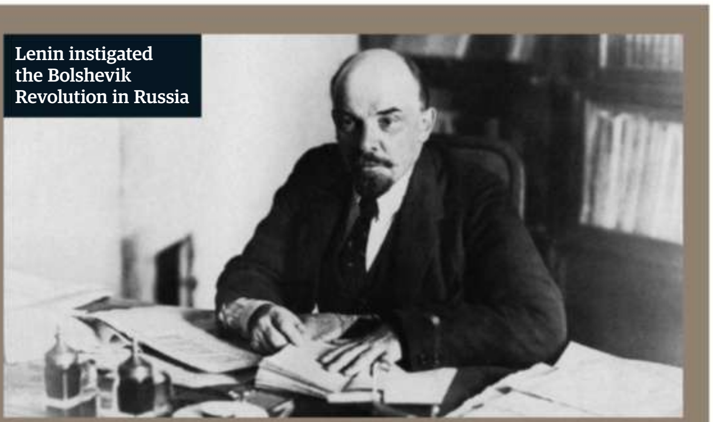
Following the Bolshevik Revolution and the sudden collapse of the Eastern Front in 1918 as Lenin's newly red Russia made peace with Germany, Churchill – as Minister of Munitions, and as of January 1919, Secretary of State for War and Secretary of State for Air – was determined, "To strangle at birth the Bolshevik State." The British North Russian Relief Force landed at the sea port of Arkhangelsk to aid the 'White' anti-communist faction in the Russian Civil War, but between June 1918 and March 1920 little gains were made. However, this campaign was the scene of the first ever intricately co-ordinated aerial and naval bombardment and amphibious landing, a neat foreshadowing perhaps of one of the greatest such operations in history – D-Day.

Outlasting World War I, it became an increasingly bitter affair, motivated by rabid anti-communism that saw the press dub it 'Mr Churchill's private war'. On the ground, court martials and disobedience were becoming commonplace, along with threats of strike action as soldiers realised that while their comrades on the Western Front had headed back home, they found themselves trudging through the snow being peppered with sniper fire.

Though Churchill and Stalin wouldn't meet until 1942, Stalin would come face to face with British forces in June 1919 when the ex-seminary student and bank robber from Georgia was leading the fighting against British troops. In honour of Stalin's defiance, Tsaritsyn would be renamed Stalingrad in 1925, and come World War II would be the scene of a bigger and bloodier battle.

Future influence

Though Churchill was quick to support the Soviet Union when Nazi Germany invaded in 1941, mutual suspicion between the two leaders always remained, in no small part because of Churchill's anti-communism stance. Throughout the war, Churchill and Stalin had a strained relationship, and after the war's end Churchill advocated a pre-emptive attack using the re-armed remnants of the German army.


Lenin instigated the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia

Churchill and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin meet in 1942

Afghans, also the Dervishes of the Sudan. Some of these might, if they were well-disposed, 'put up a show.'" These crude caricatures could be put down to the ignorance of youth, but in 1920 he mused on the links between Judaism and Bolshevism, and later still, in 1937, he spoke of the Native Americans and Australian Aboriginals, saying, "I do not admit that a wrong has been done to these people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher-grade race, a more worldly wise race to put it that way, has come in and taken their place."

The British Empire might have been at the height of its influence and prestige while Churchill galloped about, but over the decades that followed his entry to the Commons for the first time in 1900 as the MP for Oldham in Lancashire, it would swell to its geographic limit, creaking under its own weight and throwing up a set of challenges that would flow like tributaries into the churning oceans of the two world wars. Whether fighting for Britain with his thunderous rhetoric from the green benches of Parliament or with his cavalry sabre on dusty Sudanese slopes, it's clear Churchill saw it as one calling, saying to a journalist in 1906, "Politics are almost as exciting as war and quite as dangerous."

As the dogged defender of an empire mostly gained and largely maintained through force of arms, through modern eyes Churchill had disquieting commonalities with fascist regimes. His brushes with racism and anti-Semitism speak for themselves, but unlike the future Axis powers, who saw expansion as purely for the betterment of their own people, Churchill genuinely believed in the British Empire as a civilising force that would bring trains, civil service, cricket, decency and English language to those unfortunate enough to have been born without them. The real overlap, though, was a shared pathological hatred of communism, which could so easily have seen him become Hitler's cheerleader instead of implacable foe. He warned in 1929 of "A poisoned Russia, an

Churchill's medals

What Churchill's battle experiences reveal about the future leader of Britain

The 'rebellious' Pashtun Tribe

VICTORIA REGINA ET IMPERATRIX

India Medal (1898)

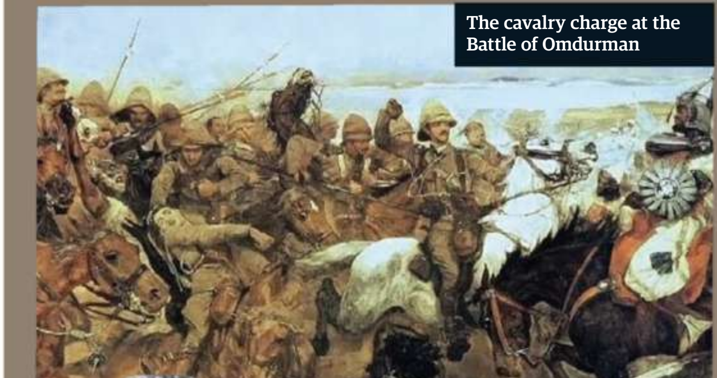
Churchill's first experience of the Empire in action, he served at Malakand in the lawless north-west frontier of India to put down rebellious Pashtun tribes. His experiences were recorded through various newspapers and his book The Story Of The Malakand Field Force.

Soldiers take a break from fighting during Gallipoli in WWI

Victory Medal (1920)

Following the Gallipoli backlash, Churchill headed to the Western Front to redeem himself. Though he disapproved of the overall strategy, he continued to exhibit daring and made 36 trips into No Man's Land. He wrote in his diary, "I have found happiness and content such as I have not known for many months."

Churchill as a prisoner of the Boers in 1899 before he mounted a daring escape



The cavalry charge at the Battle of Omdurman

The Queen's Sudan Medal (1899)

Transferred to Sudan with the 21st Lancers, Churchill took part in the decisive Battle of Omdurman against the rebels in one of the world's last significant cavalry charges.

Khedive's Sudan Medal (1899)

Resigning his commission for a failed shot at the Oldham by-election in 1899, he returned to the field the same year for the Second Boer War as a war correspondent. Ambushed while travelling, he escaped captivity and travelled 300 miles to safety.

Future influence

Churchill's vast experience in the field shaped his policies during WWII and provided a solid grounding of military tactics. Perhaps due to his earlier career, Churchill would favour decisive and daring campaigns during WWII.

infected Russia, a plague-bearing Russia, a Russia of armed hordes not only smiting with bayonet and with cannon, but… political doctrines which destroyed the health and even the souls of nations." Earlier still, in 1919 he heaped the blame for WWI's catastrophic loss of life on not the German Empire or Austro-Hungary, but on the "baboonery" of Russian Bolsheviks who had pulled the country out of the war, saying, "Every British and French soldier killed last year was really done to death by Lenin and Trotsky."

The man who would one day stare down the Axis advance even praised Mussolini, saying in 1927, "If I had been an Italian, I am sure I would have been entirely with you from the beginning to the end of your victorious struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism" and showed Hitler begrudging respect. As late as 1935 he wondered, "Whether Hitler will be the man who will once again let loose upon the world another war… or whether he will go down in history as the man who restored honour and peace of mind to the Great Germanic nation." Whatever overlap existed between Britain's brand of imperialism – for all its misuse, still tethered to the principles of parliamentary democracy – and that practised by the racist and totalitarian regimes of Italy, Germany and Japan grew increasingly slimmer on the march to war. In parallel, Churchill's anti-red rhetoric also softened, and the bulldog not only attacked Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler, but criticised him for not seeking a rapprochement with Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union – an unlikelier U-turn is harder to image.

This shift in position, the one that ultimately placed Churchill at the helm of Britain in her darkest hour, was nothing to do with political ideology and everything to do with political reality. Churchill the enemy of communism had been trumped by that first love – Churchill the imperialist. His early fears of Soviet-backed mischief in India and Ireland had been replaced by Italian ambitions in the Mediterranean, Japanese ambitions in Asia and growing German naval power, which brought them sharply into Britain's dimming spheres of influence. This rabid defence of the Empire, a product of his upbringing and his life serving this ideal, would shape his strategies in World War II, as well as transform him from an authoritarian avatar of the old order to the champion of freedom. The decision to fight primarily in North Africa, the Middle-East and

Upbringing

How Churchill's early years moulded his later career

With a family line that stretched back to John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough and commander in the 1701-14 War of the Spanish Succession that led to the acquisition of Gibraltar from Spain and Newfoundland and chunks of Canada from France, Winston seemed fated to serve as the British Empire's most ardent defender.

He was raised in the shadow of his grandfather and father, both career statesmen in the governments of Benjamin Disraeli and Lord Robert Cecil, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. Disraeli, credited with the formation of the modern British Conservative Party, also made it a party indivisible from the greater glory of the British Empire – bartering ownership of the Suez Canal and kicking off unpopular wars in South Africa and Afghanistan to pacific the rebellious population – a mission continued by Cecil, who presided over the First Boer War. It was into this most blue-blooded brotherhood and against this constant backdrop of overseas expansion that three generations of Churchills served in office.

His relationship with his father was distant, and young Winston's upbringing was largely entrusted to a nanny – which was not uncommon for children of such stature – at the Malboroughs' ancestral Blenheim Palace, a seven-acre stately home located in Oxfordshire, which in true Churchill family fashion has a prominent statue of Britannia presiding over two French captives. Following a number of schools ill-suited to Winston's difficult and distinctly non-academic temperament, he was sent to Harrow aged 13, where he found his true calling amid the dusty Latin rote learning – the Harrow Volunteer Rifle Corps.

Other students recalled the Harrow Rifles as not being a particularly popular group until at least the late 19th century, so that Churchill joined within weeks of his arrival speaks volumes about his enthusiasm for military matters. In fact, despite his unease with education, the Harrow Rifles seemed to trigger a passion for knowledge in Churchill, who wrote to his father in 1889 that, "I bought a book on drill, as I intend going in for the corporal examinations next term." With many of the traditional careers set aside for his social class – law, civil service, and through them a route to politics – conditional on university education and so firmly out of Churchill's reach, Sandhurst beckoned, and with it a chance to fulfil that most ancient imperative of the Dukes of Marlborough – the defence of the Empire.

On a return home, the young Winston enjoyed a rare encounter with his father as Lord Randolph thoughtfully inspected his son's vast collection of lead soldiers. "He spent 20 minutes studying the scene, with a keen eye and captivating smile," Winston recalled later on in his autobiography. "At the end he asked me if I would like to go into the army. I thought it would be splendid to command an army, so I said 'Yes' at once; and I was immediately taken at my word."

2nd Lieutenant Winston Churchill, 1895

Future influence

Churchill was brought up in an era in which the British Empire was the dominant force on the planet, whose influence spread far and wide. Aligned to his aristocratic upbringings, it is no surprise that Churchill was brought up utterly confident in his, and his country's place in the world. This confidence – unshakeable and at times unjustifiable – would strongly influence how he led the country after 1940.

Key moments that shaped Churchill

1895

Army service
1895
Churchill joins the 4th Hussars, and goes on to serve in India, Sudan and Egypt.

Daring escape
1899
Churchill is captured in the Second Boer War, becoming a celebrity, and a year later is elected as a Conservative Party MP.

Party defection
1904
After opposing a government bill, Churchill is de-selected by the Conservatives and joins the Liberals.

Real power
1910
He becomes Home Secretary, sends troops to support the police against striking miners and proposes a referendum on women's voting rights.

Naval reforms
1911
Churchill is promoted First Lord of the Admiralty, where he undertakes sweeping reforms.

Resignation
1915
Churchill resigns from the cabinet following the Gallipoli campaign and rejoins the army. He would return to parliament the next year.

American Connection

Establishing the special relationship

Churchill always had one eye on the United States of America, and through his American-born mother, the New York socialite and alleged inventor of the Manhattan cocktail Jennie Jerome, he had a trans-Atlantic connection that he would later play up to its full, with maternal ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary War against Britain, and even, according to family legend, some Native American blood.

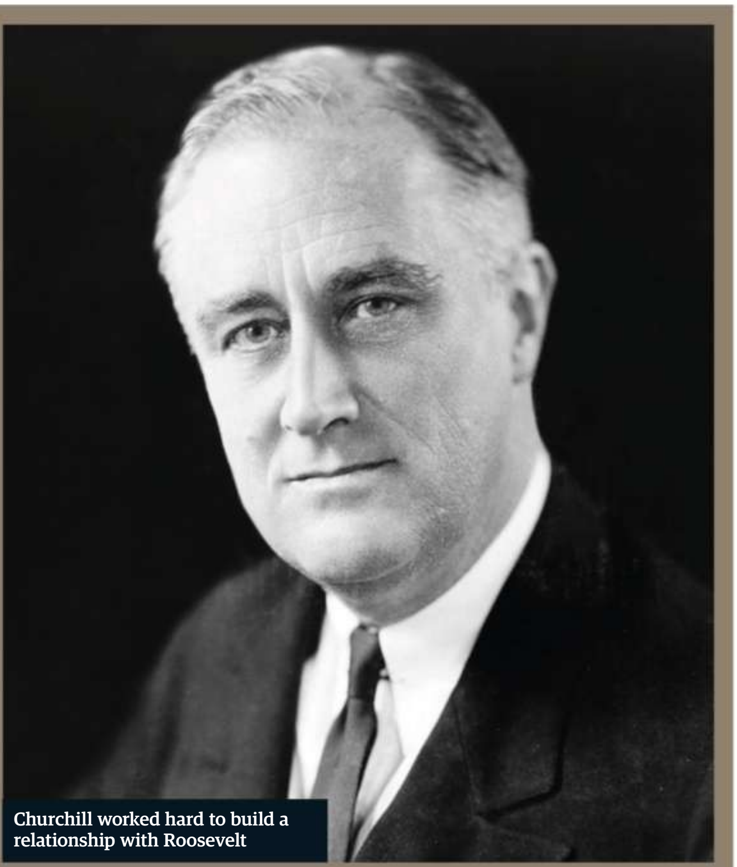
Even as early in his career as 1903, he told the gathered occupants of the House of Commons, "I have always thought that it ought to be the main end of English statecraft to cultivate good relations with the United States," and his epic A History Of The English Speaking Peoples, which he started in 1937 and finally published well after World War II, seemed contrived to create a sense of kinship between the US and the British Commonwealth. In 1939, Churchill, in his capacity as First Lord of the Admiralty, began corresponding with President Theodore Roosevelt (who'd met him once before, having been told by his advisers that Churchill was a "drunk and a windbag") – who was determined to keep the US well out of any conflict. However, Churchill did have a role to play in not only bringing the US and UK closer together, but also in paving the way for a future conflict with Imperial Japan.

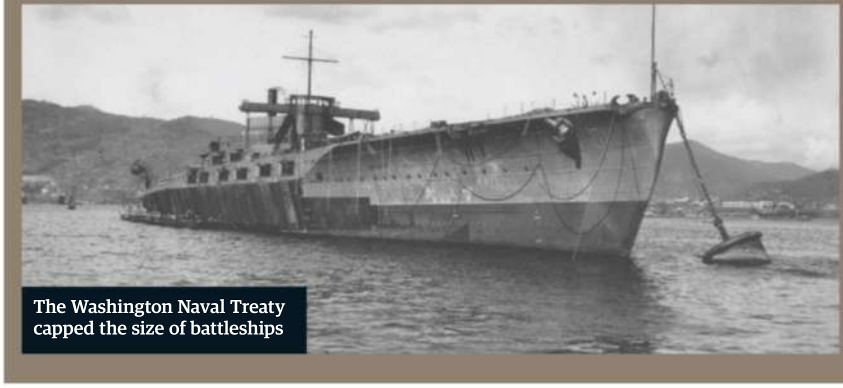
As of 1902, Britain had been allied with the newly modernised Japan in order to checkmate their shared rival Tsarist Russia and, renewed in 1905 and 1911, this treaty also entrusted the defence of Australia and New Zealand to the Japanese navy during World War I as to free up British ships for European combat. The 1921 Imperial Conference was called in part to negotiate their collective stance toward the United States and Japan, who many believed were on a collision course for dominance of the Pacific. Churchill attended in his capacity of Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the end result was to allow the Japanese alliance to lapse, in the hope of gaining American goodwill.

Japan's isolated position from the other world powers increased its belligerence, ending its participation in the Washington Naval Treaty that capped the size of battleships in 1936 and walking out of the League of Nations in 1933 over criticism of its annexation of Manchuria. "Japan is on the other end of the world," Churchill wrote in 1924. "She cannot menace our vital security." It seems optimistic, but undercutting Churchill's stance was the belief that there was nothing Japan could do without provoking a reaction from the United States. He was ultimately right, but proving it would cost many lives.

Future influence

Churchill worked the American connection hard in an attempt to build a close relationship but, nevertheless, soon after the outbreak of WWII Britain was isolated. However, when Pearl Harbour was attacked, Roosevelt was persuaded to adopt a 'Germany first' strategy to relieve Britain before they turned their full attention to Japan, a justification of Churchill's work before the war. The 'special relationship' has dominated Anglo-American foreign policy ever since.


Churchill worked hard to build a relationship with Roosevelt


The Washington Naval Treaty capped the size of battleships

Allied leaders, including Roosevelt and Churchill, confer in Quebec during WWII

1940

Election failure
1922
Fails to retain his seat in the general election and rejoins the Tories, saying, "anyone can rat, but it takes a certain ingenuity to re-rat."

Wilderness years
1929
With the Conservative government defeated in the General Election, he becomes estranged from the party and his 'wilderness years' begin.

Appeasement
1938
As Germany annexes Austria and overruns Czechoslovakia, Neville Chamberlain holds fast to his policy of appeasement, with Churchill a strong critic.

War cabinet
1939
War is declared and Churchill appointed First Lord of the Admiralty and a member of the War Cabinet, advocating a pre-emptive occupation of key ports.

Blood, sweat and tears
1940
Chamberlain resigns following the invasion of Norway, and Churchill is the agreed upon successor. He delivers his iconic 'blood, sweat and tears' speech.

then Italy at the expense of other theatres – to the irritation of both the USA and the USSR – was primarily to safeguard the Suez Canal, a vital artery of the Empire through which valuable raw materials from India to Britain were shipped, and protect the oil fields of Iraq and Persia.

Churchill's stubbornness, belligerence and refusal to negotiate under threat helped keep the Allies fighting in their dark days, but they would have been nothing without his innovative approach to military technology, which his entire life had shaped him for. Churchill may have been a poor student back when he was in short trousers, but he devoured Alfred Thayer Mahan's The Influence Of Sea Power Upon History, and told his mother in 1898 that, "Command of the sea is everything." Fittingly for such an absolute proclamation, when he was appointed as First Lord of The Admiralty in 1911, he went about perhaps the single most radical campaign of his career to date, the one that says the most about the kind of Prime Minister he would eventually become. Fearing growing German naval power, he immersed himself in naval lore and tactics.

It wasn't just the machinery and the rules of conflict that fascinated him, but the organisation, and he established a new Naval War Staff to co-ordinate strategy more fully with the government's War Office, much to the alarm of the high-ranking Sea Lords, who prized their independence – not that their opinions mattered much, and by the end of his first year in office he'd replaced three out of the four with more pliant figures. Churchill rolled out a new line of 'super dreadnaughts' – the largest warships ever built at the time – and began to explore the potential of submarines, launching planes from ships and switched the fleet from coal to oil powered which increased their speed and decreased the plumes of smoke which frequently betrayed their positions. He also threw his support, along with naval research funds, behind another promising new contraption – the tank, bizarrely considered a 'landship' and therefore falling under his remit.

It would be the possibilities of air power that stuck with him the most though, warning parliament in 1933, "Not to have an adequate air force in the present state of the world is to compromise the foundations of national freedom and independence." It is therefore no surprise that Churchill proved himself to be a talented leader of Britain's air force, and the thirst for new technology and tactics he showed throughout his life would lead him toward sponsoring such celebrated pieces of wartime ingenuity as the Bletchley Park code breakers and the birth of commando warfare.

Churchill's overthrow of the Sea Lords and his mission to bring the navy into a more central decision-making process was a dry run of sorts for his War Cabinet during WWII, in which he held the key positions of both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, as well as his personal contact and sporadic micro-management of commanders in the field. This, along with his

A seven-year-old Winston Churchill poses for the camera

Churchill the war correspondent during the Boer War

Winston Churchill and German Emperor Wilhelm II in 1906

Churchill reviews an honour guard in Berlin, where he was attending the Potsdam Conference in 1945

A half-length portrait of Winston Churchill in 1900, the year he first became an MP

Sir Winston, his son Randolph and grandson Winston

Churchill poses with an elephant he has shot

Churchill during a visit to Egypt in 1910

A year after being appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill meets with the Canadian Prime Minister

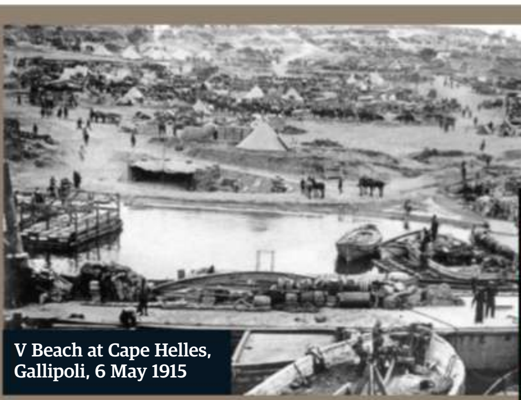
In 1904, Churchill left the Conservative party for the Liberals

Gallipoli

How Churchill recovered from disaster

Despite British naval supremacy, World War I had yet to see a decisive naval engagement when Churchill posited an ambitious plan to take the Dardanelles, the first of two channels through Ottoman Turkey (a German ally) that would link up France and Britain in the Mediterranean with Tsarist Russian in the Black Sea.

The plan was to have British and French warships simply charge through the Turkish blockade via sheer power, and then land troops (including many members of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps, the ANZACs) at Gallipoli. The heavily mined coast and unexpectedly high number of gun emplacements took their toll on the attackers, and when the troops landed, they were largely unsupported by the panicked high command at sea, who refused to move to close to the shore. Early gains weren't followed up, allowing the Turkish forces time to reinforce their position, turning this hoped-for quick campaign into another entrenched slog, only up a cliff face instead of over a Belgian field. Between 25 April 1915 and 9 January 1916, 252,000 Allied soldiers were killed before evacuation and an Australian war reporter broke the censorship to smuggle out a damning report of the commander on the ground, General Hamilton. The problem was in the planning and the divided chain of command. Churchill, who insisted the Ottomans would crumble, and General Hamilton, who was slow to take the initiative, bore the brunt of the blame, both castigated in the press and forced from their positions, but others too should have been held to account, perhaps even more so – Admiral John de Robeck refused Churchill's order to bring his ships in and provide support, while military planners in London had cut the numbers of troops set aside for the mission.

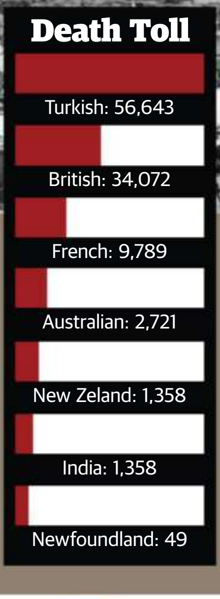


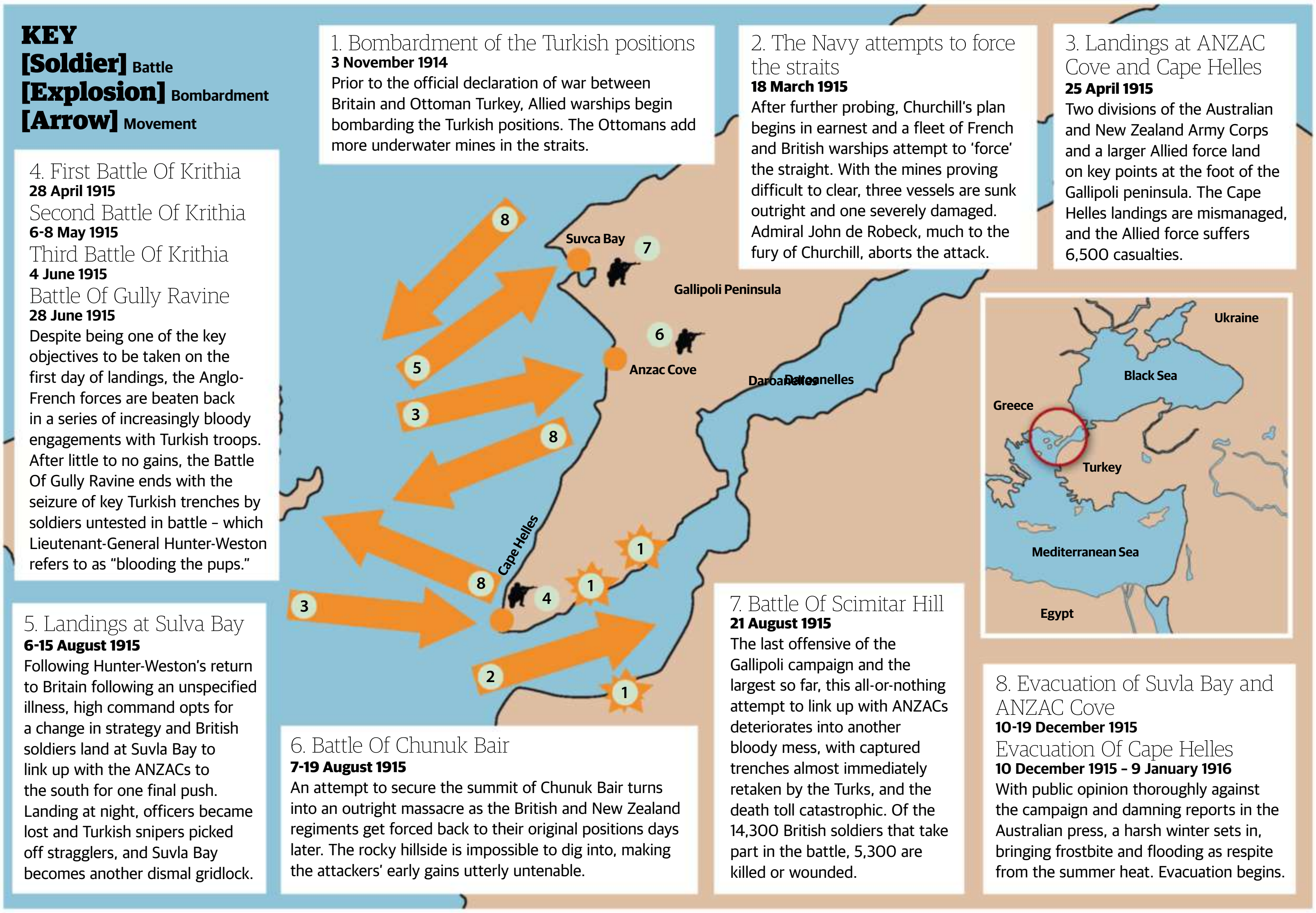
V Beach at Cape Helles, Gallipoli, 6 May 1915

Future influence

Churchill's enthusiasm for decisive action (and greater control of the commanders in the field) was strengthened – something that would influence just how much responsibility he took on during WWII. Even if he did not deserve all of the blame he bore, the setback hardened his resolve to prove himself.

Death Toll





KEY
[Soldier] Battle
[Explosion] Bombardment
[Arrow] Movement

1. Bombardment of the Turkish positions

3 November 1914

Prior to the official declaration of war between Britain and Ottoman Turkey, Allied warships begin bombarding the Turkish positions. The Ottomans add more underwater mines in the straits.

2. The Navy attempts to force the straits

18 March 1915

After further probing, Churchill's plan begins in earnest and a fleet of French and British warships attempt to 'force' the straight. With the mines proving difficult to clear, three vessels are sunk outright and one severely damaged. Admiral John de Robeck, much to the fury of Churchill, aborts the attack.

3. Landings at ANZAC Cove and Cape Helles

25 April 1915

Two divisions of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and a larger Allied force land on key points at the foot of the Gallipoli peninsula. The Cape Helles landings are mismanaged, and the Allied force suffers 6,500 casualties.

4. First Battle Of Krithia

28 April 1915

Second Battle Of Krithia

6-8 May 1915

Third Battle Of Krithia

4 June 1915

Battle Of Gully Ravine

28 June 1915

Despite being one of the key objectives to be taken on the first day of landings, the Anglo-French forces are beaten back in a series of increasingly bloody engagements with Turkish troops. After little to no gains, the Battle Of Gully Ravine ends with the seizure of key Turkish trenches by soldiers untested in battle – which Lieutenant-General Hunter-Weston refers to as "blooding the pups."

5. Landings at Sulva Bay

6-15 August 1915

Following Hunter-Weston's return to Britain following an unspecified illness, high command opts for a change in strategy and British soldiers land at Suvla Bay to link up with the ANZACs to the south for one final push. Landing at night, officers became lost and Turkish snipers picked off stragglers, and Suvla Bay becomes another dismal gridlock.

6. Battle Of Chunuk Bair

7-19 August 1915

An attempt to secure the summit of Chunuk Bair turns into an outright massacre as the British and New Zealand regiments get forced back to their original positions days later. The rocky hillside is impossible to dig into, making the attackers' early gains utterly untenable.

7. Battle Of Scimitar Hill

21 August 1915

The last offensive of the Gallipoli campaign and the largest so far, this all-or-nothing attempt to link up with ANZACs deteriorates into another bloody mess, with captured trenches almost immediately retaken by the Turks, and the death toll catastrophic. Of the 14,300 British soldiers that take part in the battle, 5,300 are killed or wounded.

8. Evacuation of Suvla Bay and ANZAC Cove

10-19 December 1915

Evacuation Of Cape Helles

10 December 1915 – 9 January 1916

With public opinion thoroughly against the campaign and damning reports in the Australian press, a harsh winter sets in, bringing frostbite and flooding as respite from the summer heat. Evacuation begins.

Churchill steps off his airplane in Berlin after the end of WWII

Churchill, with his Chiefs of Staff in the garden of No 10 Downing Street

Churchill inspects a British tank

Churchill at his seat in the Cabinet Room at No 10 Downing Street

© Alamy; Getty; Joe Cummings

> "His bold - and often unrealistic - strategies would infuriate his commanders in WWII"

bold - and often unrealistic - strategies would infuriate his commanders in WWII as regularly as it did in the previous war. Captain Osmond de Beauvoir Brock, then the Assistant Director of Naval Mobilisation, observed of Churchill's appointment in 1911, "whether all his schemes are quite sound I shouldn't like to say, but I do know that those which have come this way bear traces of great haste and little thought."

Perhaps influenced by the cavalry officer he once was, Churchill favoured bold, headline-grabbing actions that would decisively turn the tide of battle, and it was four years later in 1915 where he was knocked bloody-nosed from the saddle. The disastrous Gallipoli landings wound up as an inglorious failure, and he was ignominiously ousted from office, choosing to serve at the front to rehabilitate his reputation. His experience of the mud and squalor doubtless hardened his commitment further to grand strategies like Gallipoli, and in WWII he would drag his heels over an invasion of France, instead focusing on 'peripheral' campaigns, some successful and some every bit as ignominious.

To say Churchill was the right man at the right time sounds disingenuous, but it's tough to imagine that his indomitable strength of character, willingness to tightly grasp the reigns of power, sometimes cynical pragmatism, hawkish approach to foreign policy and fundamental belief in the primacy of the British Empire could be found in any other form. Churchill's career has more than its fair share of tragedies, missteps and moments of outright hypocrisy, but all of his past was little more than a canvas with which he would sketch out his future glory. Churchill at his worst could have been little better than the vicious tyrants he fought - a ferocious and fanatical defender of Britain's power and prestige - but the alchemy of circumstance made the most fantastic virtues of his vices, and by 1940 the world saw Churchill at his very best.

American President Harry Truman and Winston Churchill shake hands, 1945

The Life & Legacy of JFK

50 years after his death, John F Kennedy still inspires and fascinates the world

JOHN F KENNEDY
American , 1917-1963

Brief Bio

John 'Jack' F Kennedy was born into a rich Irish-American Catholic family from Brookline, Massachusetts. He served in the Navy during World War II, commanding a patrol boat in the Pacific that was destroyed by enemy fire. He married Jackie Bouvier, a rich and well-established Catholic socialite in 1953, and ascended to the presidency in 1961. He would only serve two years of his term before he was assassinated in 1963.

Election night, Tuesday 8 November 1960. John 'Jack' Fitzgerald Kennedy waited for the voting results to come through on the television, his family sat around him in the living room of his brother's home in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. The endless television interviews, broadcast debates, rallies and travelling had taken their toll on his health, he hadn't had a proper meal or a good night's sleep in two weeks, and now he was beyond exhausted. The endless lectures from his father, Joe, about image and how it didn't matter who you were, only what people thought you were, had started to grate on him. Even his wife Jackie, normally a source of comfort, was starting to unsettle him - when more favourable results came in and she said, "Oh bunny, you're president now!" he quickly turned his head away from the television screen and looked at her with his tired eyes, replying "No... no, it's too early yet".

After winning the industrial cities of the Northeast, doubt filled the cramped living room when the loss of the Midwest and the Rocky Mountain states came through on the broadcast. His opponent, Richard Nixon, was more experienced, had more supporters in the all-important south, and had been endorsed by the current president, war hero Dwight Eisenhower. He was the safe vote, while Kennedy was the young, energetic pretender. Kennedy could only hope and pray that he had done enough.

After the "longest night in history," as Jackie would later describe it, the call came in the following morning. Nixon had admitted defeat and sent a congratulatory telegram to Kennedy. It was one of the closet elections in American history; the final tally being 34,227,096 to 34,107,646 of the popular vote, with 303 to 219 of the electoral vote going to the young pretender. The bare facts say it was hardly a ringing endorsement of Kennedy, but given the experience and relative popularity of Nixon, it was a spectacular victory. Against the advice of his closet supporters, Kennedy visited Nixon in Florida on 14 November. Kennedy wasn't impressed. He silently listened to Nixon dominate what was meant to be a friendly conversation about the last few months, and wondered how a man like this had nearly won the presidency. As he clambered back onto his helicopter after it was

over, he turned to an aide and said, "It was just as well for all of us he didn't quite make it!"

Kennedy's presidency would go down in history as the dawn of a new era. He changed the face of politics by courting the media and creating his very own cult of celebrity, inspiring hope through his charm and freedom through his liberal policies. He gave the US a renewed self-confidence through his tough reputation abroad, and after his brutal assassination in Dallas his legacy would live on.

At the start of Kennedy's long fight for Democratic nomination in 1957, a reporter said that Kennedy was Washington's 'hottest tourist attraction'. It was widely rumoured he had an 'in' in Life magazine because of all the positive press he received there, and the American Mercury hailed him as the "perfect politician". Others were less convinced. "He'll never make it with that haircut," commented a prominent politician from New York.

It was true that Kennedy had his critics, but it was his deep connection with the media, getting his name in the public domain and making sure that through his family connections it stayed out there in the best possible light, that made his political campaigns in the Fifties a success. The media was enamoured with his good looks, beautiful wife and young family. He represented the American dream, descended from Irish immigrants and doing well through America's bounty to become a senator in the most powerful country in the world. He was the equivalent of an A-list celebrity on Capitol Hill, and he didn't mind the status, as he himself remarked, "This publicity does one good thing: it takes the Vice out of Vice-President." This wasn't to say that he was a shallow man who simply enjoyed the press for his own vanity; the press shots of him and Jackie with their children in Hyannis Port may have been doctored to fit the idyll of the perfect American family, but they do portray a genuine sentiment of love.

One of the most compelling stories that illustrates his character was not caught on camera, however. During his tenure in office, an aide was showing a group of disabled children around the White House when their wheelchairs prevented them from joining the rest of the tour group. Kennedy, late for a meeting, spotted them and came over to the children. The aide recalled: "He crossed the lawn to us, insisted on being introduced to each child and either picked up each limp, paralysed hand to shake it, or touched the child on the cheek. He had a different conversation with each child… the child's face radiated a joy totally impossible to describe." Kennedy's natural charm was rooted in compassion – something that the press could project, but not create.

The power over the press he possessed even allowed him to overcome the prejudices sections of American society held due to his Catholic upbringing; one writer remarked, "The stereotype of the Irish Catholic politician, the pugnacious, priest-ridden representative of an embittered, embattled minority, simply does not fit the poised, urbane, cosmopolitan young socialite from Harvard." This was put to the test when he was nominated as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. He knew he would need something more than his easy smile, good looks and friends in the print media, as these alone would not be enough against a seasoned politician like Nixon; he would need something that would allow him to reach millions and captivate them with his personality. He needed the power of television.

Kennedy's time would come during the first live television debates in September 1960, a contest

> "Not everyone was convinced by Kenendy. 'He'll never make it with that haircut,' commented a prominent politician from New York"

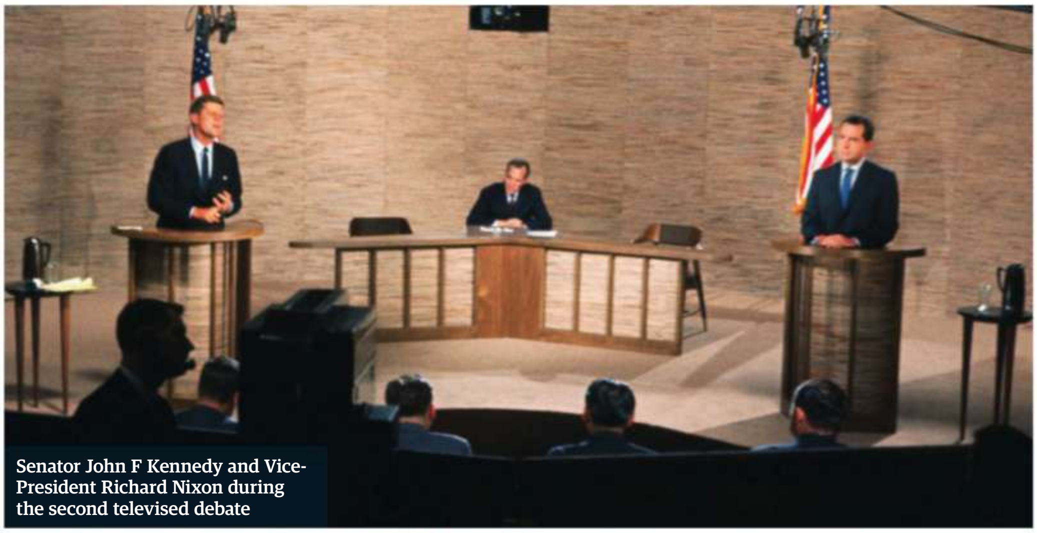
One of my sons will be president

Joe Kennedy famously made the above claim about his sons. He was a man who expected a lot from his family – after all, they were Kennedys, and thus destined for greatness. Born in 1888, Joe grew up in a well-established Catholic family from Boston. He worked in Hollywood as a film producer and then entered politics as part of the Franklin Roosevelt administration. He later became ambassador to Britain, famously saying the country was "finished" in 1940. He was renowned for his political connections, using them to see his children established among the elite of American society after the war. It was also rumoured that he had unofficial connections with the Mafia, using them as he used everyone else: to get more power and influence. He was a domineering and harsh father, especially when his family didn't meet his high standards, and infamously had his daughter Rosemary lobotomised because of her violent personality. He also 'vetted' husbands for his daughters, ensuring they all married into families that would benefit the family. His affairs with other women were legendary, estranging him from his wife, Rose. He was a pessimist and isolationist, weighed down with old prejudices of the Protestant-dominated middle class. Jack was none of these things, outgrowing Joe's outdated beliefs.

JFK: President, statesman and American hero

that was watched by over 60 million people. Kennedy had taken a tour of the television studio beforehand, where his aides had worked out how the lighting, sound and shooting angles would benefit him; everything would have to be perfect if he was to shine on the box. Both candidates were offered the services of a CBS make-up artist – not that Kennedy needed it, as his skin looked tanned and healthy after campaigning in California. Nixon, on the other hand, looked pasty and sweaty, having only just recovered from a knee injury, but declined the make-up services. Ultimately, he got one of his aides to apply some make-up on minutes before the broadcast to cover up his stubble, but coupled with his pale complexion, it only made him look ill and dirty. Kennedy received coaching from consultants to allow him to practice rebuking Nixon's comment while maintaining eye contact with the audience straight down the lens.

Nixon was confident he could wing it, with one commentator noting afterwards that, "Nixon was addressing himself to Kennedy – but Kennedy was addressing himself to the audience that was the nation." Kennedy chose a suit that contrasted well with the background of the set, while Nixon's blended horribly into the backdrop. Kennedy was prepared and ready; Nixon looked nervous and tired. The result was a popular victory for Kennedy, with one newspaper editor commenting, "The [television] medium is good to Kennedy and most unkind to Nixon. It makes Kennedy look forceful. It makes Nixon look guilty." Emphasising the differences in perception television offered, the majority of those who heard the radio debate thought Nixon had won, while those who watched on television were inclined in favour of Kennedy.



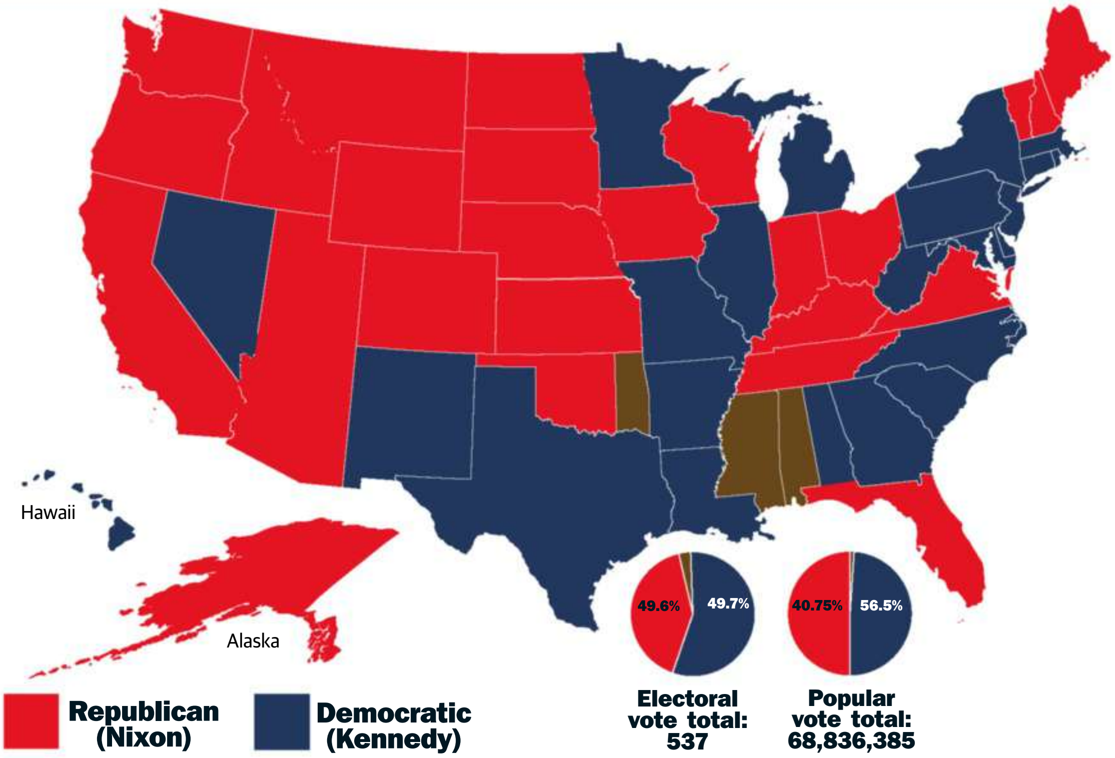
Senator John F Kennedy and Vice-President Richard Nixon during the second televised debate

Spectators line the streets of Ireland to catch a glimpse of Kennedy

Presidential nominees Kennedy and Nixon smiling for the cameras prior to their first televised debate

How America was won

The presidential election of 1960 was one of the closest in American history. Richard Nixon, Kennedy's opponent, was able to gain significant control over the American Midwest, a traditional Republican stronghold, and in California and Florida, which carried with it a large number of votes in the electoral college. Kennedy, however, seized control of Texas, a state with a large number of voters, through his running mate Lyndon B Johnson and the industrial heartland of America in the Northeast with the help of his father through his political connections with influential industrialists. One of the major battlegrounds was Chicago, Illinois, which held a large amount of supporters for both Kennedy and Nixon. Controversies would emerge later about Democratic mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, rigging the Illinois vote for Kennedy after a conversation he had with Joe Kennedy and, apparently, the Chicago outfit. In the end, Illinois was won by a paper-thin margin of 8,858 votes.



Kennedy was the first presidential candidate to properly utilise the power of the media and the idea of looking 'right' to connect with audiences through the medium of television, and it paid out in dividends. Subsequent presidents and their PR teams would never forget it. To this day, the presidential debates are given the highest priority, with PR consultants spending hours coaching and teaching respective nominees when to smile, when to laugh and how to look, even down to the shoes and ties they're wearing. It was Kennedy's stunning victory and his associations with the press before and after the 1960 election that subsequent presidential campaigns modelled themselves on. The image of the man who would lead the American people was now just as important as the man's politics. But of course, looking right was only part of the story; Kennedy had to have the right policies to fully tap into the pool of voters. As influential columnist William V Shannon wrote, "Month after month, from the glossy pages of Life to the multicoloured cover of Redbook, Jack and Jackie Kennedy smile out at millions of readers; he with his tousled hair and winning smile, she with her dark eyes and beautiful face… But what has all this to with statesmanship?" Ostensibly, the answer could be found in his hard-nosed Cold War rhetoric, but there was another issue burning through America in the Sixties that Kennedy could not afford to ignore: the fight for civil rights.

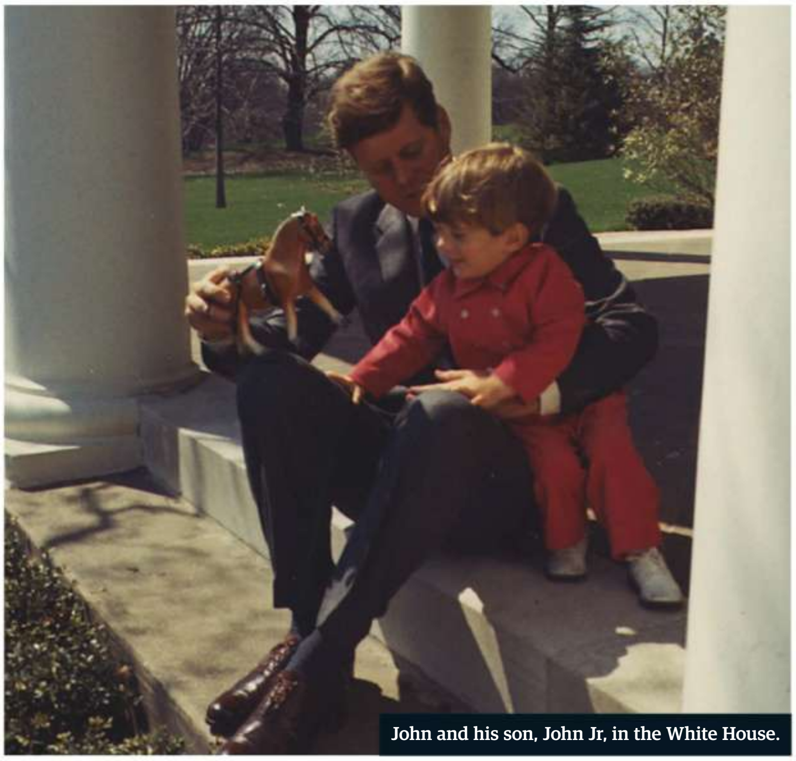
By 1960, the civil rights movement under Martin Luther King Jr was worrying the southern states, who were holding firm on segregation and humiliating the political community in America as a whole in the process. How on earth could a country that claimed to be the leader of the free world still instigate a policy that restricted, oppressed and otherwise degraded American citizens based on their skin colour? It was a question that was becoming urgent, with the broadcast media reporting all the sit-ins and protests of black citizens in the deep south to an anxious American public; the very people Kennedy would have to get on his side if he was to take the presidency and keep hold of it.

As the election loomed in the autumn of 1960, Kennedy was still looking weak on the civil rights issue. He was certainly more liberal than his opponent, but he didn't have anything of substance to beat him with. By coincidence, King was arrested on 19 October – a month before the election – while taking part in a sit-in protest. Kennedy pounced on it as an opportunity. He phoned the shaken Mrs King, saying "I want to express to you my concern about your husband. I understand that you are expecting a baby, and I just wanted you to know that I was thinking about you and Dr King." It galvanised black voters, with King's father saying, "He can be my President, Catholic or whatever he is. It took courage to call my daughter-in-law at a time like this. He has the moral courage to stand up for what he knows is right." King himself was unconvinced. Despite these words, he was still not pushing civil rights; he was playing the political

John F Kennedy in uniform, 1942

John and Jackie on their wedding day in 1953

The Kennedy family relax at their home in Hyannis Port



John and his son, John Jr, in the White House.

Kennedy and family pose for the camera

The Kennedy brothers: Jack, Bobby and Ted

Kennedy children visit the Oval Office

JFK (second left) with his parents and siblings at Hyannis Port, 04 September 1931

Watching The America's Cup race

John and Jackie with their children in 1962

Deep in thought while in transit in the 1960 US Presidential campaign

With Martin Luther King and other delegates from the rally in Washington DC

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LAW NOW
FREEDOM
DEMAND VOTING RIGHTS NOW!
FOR ALL NOW!
OR ALL IT PAY NOW!

Over 200,000 protestors marched along the Capitol mall in Washington on 28 August 1963

> "He had created an atmosphere where change, when it came, would seem no longer an upheaval"

game. It was just words – words enough to capture the presidency, but words nonetheless.

King would call Kennedy's bluff in August 1963 after Kennedy's inaction, marching on Washington with thousands of supporters. Kennedy begged him not to, fearing the marchers would turn violent. But march they did, black and white, the largest demonstration to ever come to the capital, with King at the front of the huge procession, proudly proclaiming, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." Kennedy looked on open-mouthed; the rapture of the crowd hanging on King's every word was beyond impressive. He immediately invited King and his inner circle to the White House, offering refreshments and a promise to get things moving where he could on civil rights. It was probably a combination of Kennedy's own moral scruples and King's loud insistence that finally got civil rights on the right path, but inaction would still dog Kennedy's record on the agenda.

To say that Kennedy was a mere political opportunist would be grossly unfair, however. He was a man of principles, and the treatment of black communities in the deep South sickened him. However, it is a myth that he was a radical activist of the civil rights movement; he was far too pragmatic for that. Actively supporting the civil rights movement more than he did would have destroyed his support in the South and make what Nixon would later call the 'silent majority' everywhere else uneasy. His presidency did not bring solid change, and his successor Lyndon B Johnson would do far more, but it was a rallying cry for a new beginning. By meeting King and publicly endorsing the ideal of civil rights for all, even if he did not actively support the campaign in practice, would give civil rights the national platform it needed and Kennedy's own celebrity endorsement to bring civil rights to the top of the national agenda. As Arthur Schlesinger, a social commentator in the Sixties observed, "He had quietly created an atmosphere where change, when it came, would seem no longer an upheaval, but the inexorable unfolding of the promise of American life." Kennedy would not go eyeball-to-eyeball with civil rights, but he would with Communism. It was the realms of foreign affairs where he would make his stand, where there could be no comprise, and where the legend of Kennedy's confrontation with the Soviets would change the world forever.

Communism was not only objectionable as far as Kennedy was concerned, but a moral evil. It stood against everything he believed about human rights and human dignity. The Communist leadership were godless, their state control oppressed its own people and their vast armies oppressed the people of the globe; it was to be despised. When he made his inaugural address he spoke of not daring to "tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed." This was the hard line of the Cold War warrior – create the biggest conventional and nuclear arsenal available to scare the Communists into never attacking the free world, and Kennedy believed in it completely. He would go on to talk about the need for reconciliation, but warned against negotiating "out of fear." He had followed the line of Theodore Roosevelt, the man who flexed American muscle at the turn of the century: tread softly on the international stage, but carry a big stick.

Rhetoric would turn to action when Kennedy gave the green light to the ill-fated Bay of Pigs operation, later to be known as the 'undeniable fiasco'. It was the first major military undertaking of his presidency, but the plan was ill-conceived and deeply flawed from the beginning. Even Kennedy talked about plausible deniability of the whole affair by its end. The plan was for the CIA to land thousands of military-trained Cuban exiles onto the Cuban mainland and, by proxy, try to enact a coup. It relied on Castro not being in full control of Cuba, although unfortunately for Kennedy he was. As the invasion party landed, Cubans loyal to Castro bombed and machine-gunned the exiles into the sea, causing horrendous casualties. CIA chiefs pleaded with the president to allow the US air force to support the exiles, and initially Kennedy was inclined to agree, saying, "I'd rather be called an aggressor than a bum." Soviet interest in the affair would cool his aggression, and after tense diplomatic negotiation he shied away from further intervention with US air support in case the Russians were "apt to cause trouble." It was seen as a betrayal by the CIA and the Cuban exiles, who were left without adequate air cover and died in their hundreds on Cuban beaches. Neither the CIA nor the exiles would forget it.

Kennedy Connections

Industry

ENTREPRENEUR

George Skakel
Father-in-law to Bobby Kennedy and founder of the Great Lakes Carbon Corporation.

John Vernou Bouvier III
John Vernou 'Black Jack' Bouvier was a key link for the Kennedys into the world of business and high society. He owned land, and was a successful stockbroker. His nickname 'Black Jack' was acquired through his love of gambling and drinking.

SISTER-IN-LAW

Ethel Kennedy
Wife to Bobby, Ethel provided the Kennedys with a link to one of the country's biggest businesses: the Great Lakes Carbon Corporation.

Robert 'Bobby' Kennedy
Brother to Jack and Attorney-General to the United States, Bobby was part of the inner circle of the Kennedy family, connected to huge industry concerns through his wife Ethel and the CIA.

FATHER-IN-LAW

Jackie Kennedy
Wife of the president, Jackie provided the Kennedy family with one of many links into the upper echelons of American society. Her family, through her father's business concerns, were extremely wealthy and she was an extremely popular socialite.

Politics

Ted Kennedy
The youngest brother of the Kennedy family, Ted was a senator and key voice of support for the Kennedy political machine though Jack's presidency and Bobby's bid for presidential nomination.

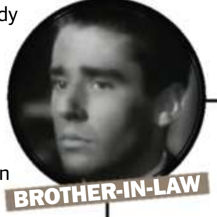
Joe Kennedy
A major hub in the Kennedy connection, Joe was one of the main routes into politics for Jack, and also maintained links with Hollywood.

William J Tuohy
Tuohy was the chief judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County Illinois and provided Joe with a link to Sam Giancana who, it is rumoured, helped Joe and Jack gain Mafia support for the key electoral battleground in Illinois.

Patricia Lawford
Patricia, sister to Jack and husband to the A-list celebrity actor Peter, provided another strong link from the White House to Hollywood and the California celebrity scene.

Judith Campbell
Judith Campbell was a mistress of Kennedy and a self-proclaimed conduit between him and the Mafia. She was also linked to mob bosses John Roselli and Sam Giancana.

Peter Lawford
Peter Lawford was a member of the Kennedy family through marriage and also part of the 'rat pack' with its Mafia connections, and a close friend to Frank Sinatra. He was also linked with Marilyn Monroe, and arranged meetings with her for the President.



Frank Sinatra
Frank Sinatra knew many members of the Kennedy family, most notably Joe and Bobby Kennedy and the President himself. He acted as a go-between for the three men, allowing them to meet famous celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, who he was having an affair with. He also provided the Kennedys with links to the Mafia, and at times set up dates for them with women when their wives were away.

Sam Giancana
Mob boss and head of the main crime family in Chicago, Sam was connected to the Kennedys through Frank Sinatra and Judith Campbell. It was alleged that the CIA employed his associates to kill Fidel Castro.

Marilyn Monroe
Kennedy's relationship with Monroe is steeped in mystery. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the two shared a sexual relationship, although this was never fully proven.

John Roselli
Mob boss and connected to Sam Giancana, Roselli was involved in the Mafia-run casinos in Cuba, and one of the mobsters that the CIA recruited to kill Castro. He was reportedly sleeping with Judith Campbell during the period when she was having an affair with the President.

William King Harvey
Harvey was a CIA spook who reportedly recruited Mafia kingpins Roselli and Giancana to kill Castro with the quiet blessing of Bobby Kennedy.

Hollywood

Crime

First Lady

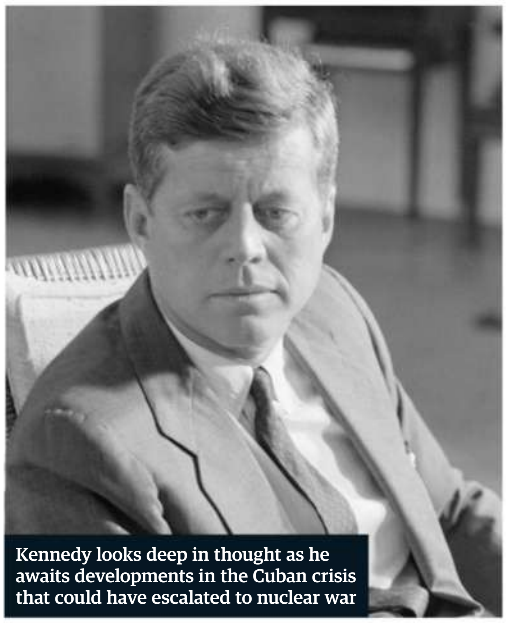
Jackie Kennedy was a woman of intelligence, beauty and money; a true American socialite. She was born into one of the wealthiest Catholic families in America, and her father, John Vernou 'Black Jack' Bouvier, owned land and capital throughout the Northeast. She met Jack through her work as a photographer in Washington DC, marrying him on 12 September 1953 after a whirlwind romance. In many ways she set the tone for future First Ladies.

Like her husband she courted the media, making sure she always dressed immaculately and remained on message for press interviews. But she also made the position her own, and was a force for change in the White House, seeing to it that the unique furniture, ornaments and pictures within its rooms were preserved and catalogued, where before they had either been lost or neglected by previous occupants. She established the post of White House Curator, and created the White House Fine Arts Committee to protect the treasures inside its walls. She could also speak several foreign languages, which she would use to her advantage on goodwill missions abroad. Her charm and grace enamoured foreign dignitaries, and after one trip to Paris, Vienna and Greece, Clark Clifford, advisor to the president sent her a congratulatory note saying, "Once in a great while, an individual will capture the imagination of people all over the world. You have done this… through your graciousness and tact." As her celebrity status spread, she received so much fan mail that it required 13 people to process the letters. Often they were deeply personal, with a girl from Indonesia writing, "I've seen pictures of you. I am studying English because I admire you so much." Another from a Japanese girl said, "My mother tells me not to slump so that I will grow up to be tall and queenly like you." She became so popular that her husband often joked that it was Jackie people wanted to see. She always put her family first, ensuring that her children were well-cared for and educated, saying to a reporter, "If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much."

The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion did not temper the attitudes of the president or his closest advisors; quite the contrary. The disaster convinced the Kennedy administration that the Communists needed to be taken seriously, as anymore failures would risk goading aggressive Communist intentions. In the highly pressurised environment of the White House, straight-talking, hard-ball attitudes and the concoction of the 'red menace' frequently turned strategy into personal vendettas against the Communist leadership for the Kennedy family. Bobby Kennedy, Jack's younger brother and Attorney-General for the American government, would take the Bay of Pigs disaster as a personal slight against him. Castro had made the Kennedy family (and the US) look weak, and now he was going to "get him" by any means necessary, even commissioning a plan for an exploding seashell to be planted at Castro's favourite diving spot to take his head off. Conversely, Jack didn't order a full invasion of Cuba, nor any provocative move in that region until it was absolutely necessary. In a famous comment made to an aide about the prospect of an American invasion of Cuba, he said; "The minute I land one marine we're in this thing up to our necks. I can't get the United States into a war and then lose it, no matter what it takes. I'm not going to risk a slaughter".

But Kennedy's caution was still infused with the influence of manful bravado inherited from his patriarchal family and the hawks in his own government, who were ever-ready to go toe-to-toe with the Communists. Ultimately, his refusal to 'blink' during the blockade of Cuba brought the world to the brink of nuclear war: for 13 days in 1962, he held the fate of billions in his hands in order to prove to the Russian Premier Khrushchev that when it came to American security there could be no compromise. As with the Bay of Pigs, it was also intensely personal. Kennedy felt deceived by the Soviets, who were talking to him about nuclear disarmament while installing medium-range missiles on the Cuban mainland. He called the Soviets "barefaced liars" and hurled expletives whenever he heard the names of Castro or Khrushchev during meetings in the run up to the blockade. They had made him look foolish and soft on the Communist problem, and the blockade represented the most he could do to confront them without tipping the world into a nuclear holocaust.

Rational thinking gave way to zero-sum thinking on the nature of the international Communist threat after the Cuban Missile Crisis, even if by this point impartial evidence suggested that Communism was not only far weaker, but also hopelessly divided among its global constituents. To Kennedy, however, ever-ready to fight the good fight, the threat was still real and it was engulfing south-east Asia. He ordered more military advisors



Kennedy looks deep in thought as he awaits developments in the Cuban crisis that could have escalated to nuclear war

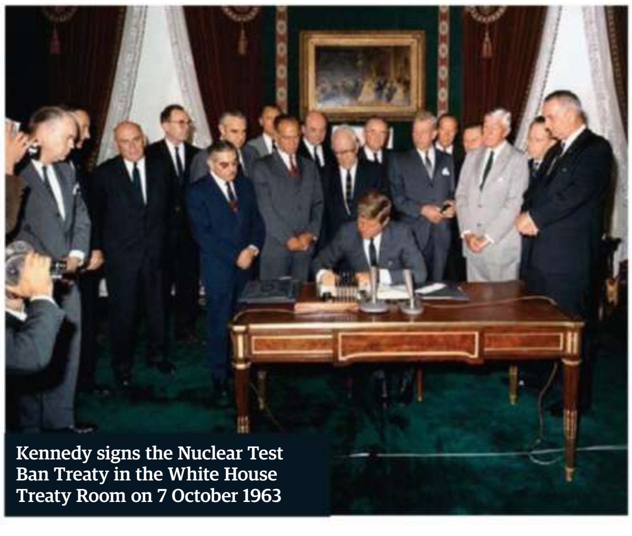
President Kennedy presiding over a meeting with senior White House officials during the Cuban Missile Crisis into Vietnam, as well as the creation of a new fighting force designed to combat Communist insurgents at grass-roots level: the Green Berets .

He publicly endorsed the Diem regime in South Vietnam led by Ngo Dinh Diem, despite private reservations about their effectiveness and cruelty to their own people. As the war intensified, Diem, a stanch Catholic, was drawing ever more criticism from his own people, the majority of who were Buddhist. After brutal crackdowns on the Buddhist community at the beginning of 1963, monks set themselves on fire in the middle of a busy street in Saigon in protest. The response by one of Diem's closet advisors, his sister-in-law Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, was heartless. She told a CBS film crew that the Buddhists had just "barbecued" themselves, and next time she would provide the mustard. For Kennedy, a man who lived shoulder to shoulder with the media, this was a disaster. The regime that America was supposed to be protecting was in fact a cruel dictatorship. Kennedy's troops remained in Vietnam even after the brutal events of 1963 as Diem's regime may have been harsh, but as far as Kennedy's administration was concerned, at least it wasn't Communist.

The memory of Kennedy's legendary stand-off with Communism would linger in the halls of the White House after his death. No future president would dare look weak in front of the Communist lest they appeared weaker than Kennedy, prompting a military invasion of Vietnam by Johnson and a perception that any failure to contain Communism throughout the globe was a de-facto failure of the current American administration. Debates about whether the Vietnam War would have been conducted differently if Kennedy had been at the helm continue to endure. Kennedy balked at appearing weak in front of the Communists, but he was a far more able negotiator than his successors and, it is said by some, would

> "The memory of Kennedy's legendary stand-off with Communism would linger in the halls of the White House"

Kennedy meets with US Army officials during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962



Kennedy signs the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in the White House Treaty Room on 7 October 1963

President and Mrs Kennedy with leaders of the Cuban Invasion Brigade

The other women

Marilyn Monroe

The Marilyn Monroe affair was probably the most infamous of Kennedy's relationships during his time in government. The two met through Peter Lawford on four separate occasions, one of which, it is claimed, resulted in sexual relations. Her raunchy rendition of *Happy Birthday* during Kennedy's 45th birthday celebrations and the dress she was wearing at the time, described as "flesh with sequins sewed onto it," left little to the imagination.

Judith Campbell

Long the subject of repeated denials and cover-ups, until revelations in the Seventies revealed that Kennedy indeed had an on-off affair with Campbell, who was also linked with Mob bosses Sam Giancana and John Roselli. It was one of the most enduring affairs Kennedy had, and he was aware of the risks to his political career of sleeping with a woman with connections to the Mafia, but carried on.

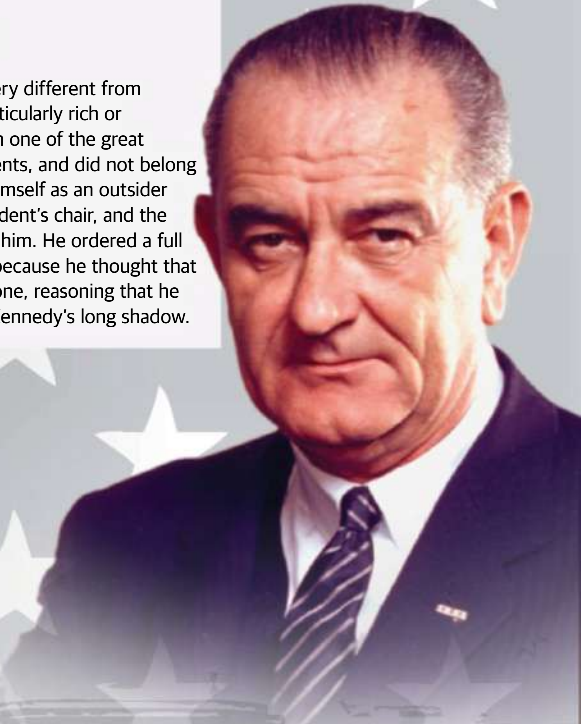
Gunilla Von Post

The Von Post affair started just after Kennedy was married. Von Post was a Swedish socialite, meeting Kennedy on the French Riviera after her aristocratic family sent her there to brush up on her French. A passionate affair ensued, with graphic love letters and lustful liaisons occurring throughout the Fifties. The tryst was so serious that Kennedy reportedly considered leaving Jackie for her, but feared his father's reaction.

The one that got away... Sophia Loren

In a rather embarrassing episode, Sophia Loren, one of the most iconic film stars of the age, turned Kennedy down, and in no uncertain terms told him and his lackey to leave her alone during a dinner at the Italian Embassy in Washington in the late Fifties. This was despite Kennedy's gallant offer to include her female interpreter in a night of passion so that she didn't feel left out.

Kennedy's Influence



Lyndon B Johnson

1963-69

Johnson's ascent to power was very different from Kennedy's. His family was not particularly rich or influential, he was not educated in one of the great American educational establishments, and did not belong to the Washington 'set'. He saw himself as an outsider when he was thrust into the President's chair, and the ghost of his predecessor haunted him. He ordered a full military commitment in Vietnam because he thought that was what Kennedy would have done, reasoning that he could not afford to look weak in Kennedy's long shadow.

Richard Nixon

1969-74

Nixon returned to the White House in 1969 with one promise: to get America out of Vietnam. The problem was he didn't obey Kennedy's unofficial rule for success: get the press on your side. Part of Kennedy's legacy was the increased importance of the press and image. Unfortunately, Nixon had neither the words nor the persona to control the crises in image he faced. In the wake of the Kent State University shootings and the Watergate scandal, his credibility was destroyed and he resigned in the face of almost certain impeachment.

Bill Clinton

1993-2001

Bill Clinton's relationship with the media during his presidential campaign, his easy charm, down-to-earth persona and photogenic appearance on chat shows and live television debates was certainly influenced by Kennedy's media legend. In fact, Clinton and Kennedy's campaigns were very similar. In both cases the liberal underdog was going up against established right-wing thinking – in Clinton's case it was George HW Bush. It was also the impressive way that Clinton's team organised his campaign by setting out key goals but presenting them in an informal manner, much like Kennedy's 'new age' in American life, that won Clinton the presidency.

Barack Obama

2009-present

Obama's 'Hope' campaign in 2009 that the US could 'Rise again' in a new age of prosperity bears marked resemblances to the Kennedy campaign. The idea of 'renewal' has been a strong theme in American elections, and Obama used it to great effect in 2009 after the disillusionment felt by many post-Bush administration.

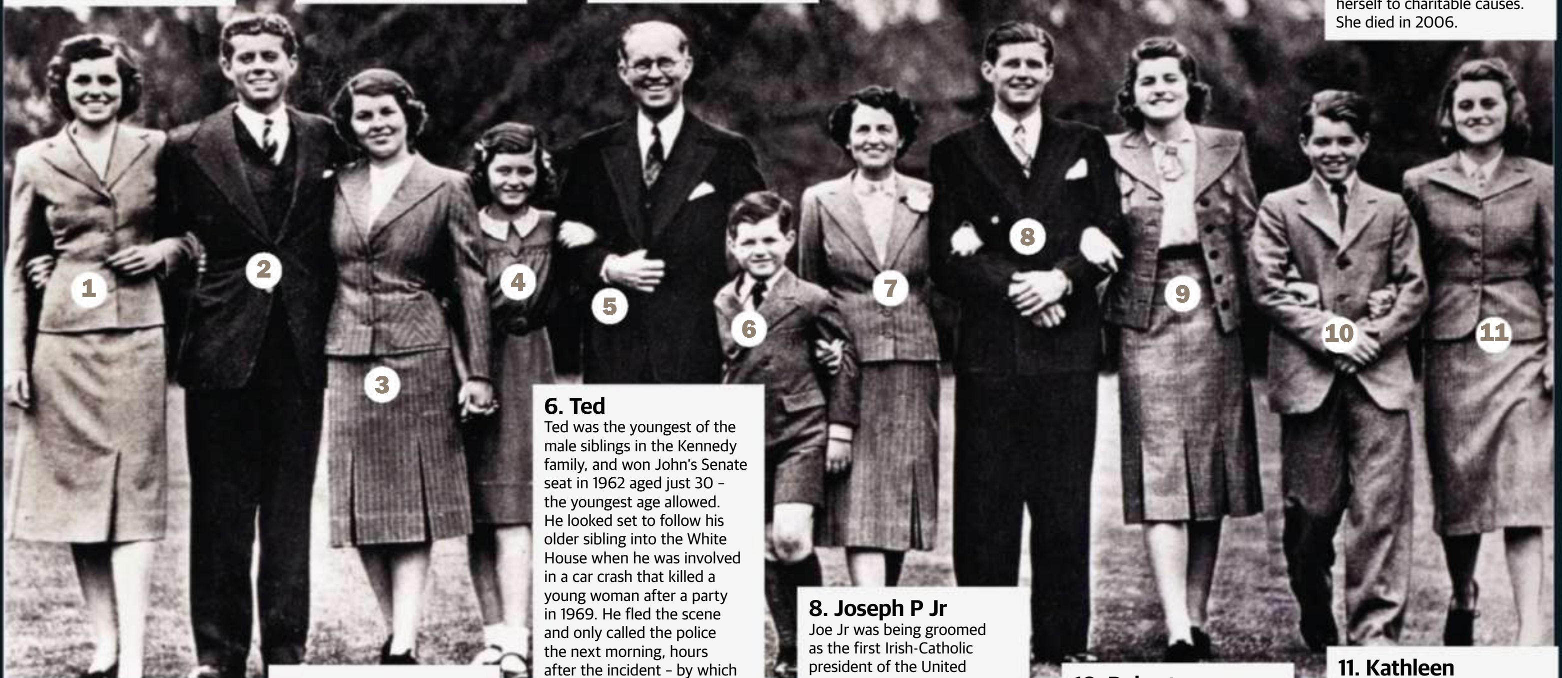
have brought Vietnam to a peaceful conclusion far quicker and with less casualties. But part of Kennedy's success was due to his international grandstanding. His image as young, energetic and tough chimed well with the mood of a US that wanted a nation that was assertive and cut away from the stagnation of the Eisenhower years and the defeats under Truman. It is unlikely that he would have ordered a full withdrawal at Vietnam, but part of his enduring persona has, like the issues surrounding civil rights, created a myth that things would have been very different – and a lot better – had he survived.

The bleak days of November 1963 would haunt America forever. Kennedy's funeral took place on 25 November, three days after his assassination. As his funeral procession made its long march up to St Matthew's Cathedral, it was accompanied by Black Jack, a riderless horse symbolising the loss of a great leader. When his casket was brought out after the service, foreign dignitaries including Charles de Gaulle of France and thousands of American citizens watched in silence. Troops of the United States Navy brought the casket down the steep steps, and as it reached the bottom Jackie Kennedy knelt down and whispered to her son, John Jr; "John, you can salute your daddy now and say goodbye to him." Author William Manchester noted, "Of all of Monday's images, nothing approached the force of John's salute… it was heart-wrenching." In summing up the day's events, columnist Mary McGrory wrote of "grief nobly borne." Kennedy's final resting place was the Arlington National Cemetery – as befitting an American hero.

On hearing of Kennedy's death, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said that Kennedy embodied "all the hopes and aspirations of this new world." His influence continues to be felt; Barack Obama's 'Hope' campaign for a new beginning in the US was influenced by Kennedy's own in 1960. Kennedy was a man that could be admired, followed and respected. His death shocked everyone, and his boundless potential and hope for a better and more peaceful world was lost forever, along with the man that he might have become.

> "John F Kennedy's final resting place was the Arlington National Cemetery – as befitting an American hero"

What became of the Kennedy clan?



1. Eunice
Eunice was a strong advocate for the Democratic party, and married Robert Sargent Shiver Jr, who became the US Ambassador to France and Democratic Vice Presidential candidate in 1972. She was a vocal supporter of pro-life views, and her daughter Maria would marry actor turned Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger. She died of a stroke in 2009.

2. John F
John ascended to the presidency in 1961, before being brutally assassinated in 1963. His politics and ideals changed both the US and the world, with his legacy dwarfing his short lifespan.

3. Rosemary
Rosemary suffered from violent mood swings, and was not as academically talented as her siblings. She was said to be beautiful and happy during her teenage years, but her apparent slowness grated on her father. In 1941, at the age of 23, he decided that she should have a lobotomy to calm her mood swings, which caused irreversible damage to her brain. She died in 2005.

4. Jean
Jean was exceptionally gifted academically, and entered politics as a Democrat, eventually becoming the US ambassador to Ireland during the Clinton administration. She was a key politician during the run-up to the IRA ceasefire and the Good Friday Agreement of the Nineties.

5. Joe
Ambitious, tenacious and at times cruel, Joe fought his entire life to ensure his family remained at the top of American political life. When he finally achieved his main goal – getting one of his sons in the presidency – he suffered a debilitating stroke that left him paralysed and with impaired speech. He died shortly after the death of his son, Bobby, in 1969.

6. Ted
Ted was the youngest of the male siblings in the Kennedy family, and won John's Senate seat in 1962 aged just 30 – the youngest age allowed. He looked set to follow his older sibling into the White House when he was involved in a car crash that killed a young woman after a party in 1969. He fled the scene and only called the police the next morning, hours after the incident – by which time the woman's body had already been discovered. He remained in politics and became one of the longest-running Senators in American history. He fought for free Healthcare for the American people throughout his career, calling it "The cause of my life." He died of brain cancer in 2009.

7. Rose
The wife of Joe and a constant source of stability for the Kennedy family as a whole, Rose would see the death of three of her sons and her second daughter, the shocking after-effects of a lobotomised first daughter and the constant humiliations of her husband's extra-marital affairs. Despite all of this, she was dedicated to her family and their well-being, and was described by Jackie Kennedy as a "thoroughbred" who did "everything to put one at one's ease." She died in 1995 at the age of 104.

8. Joseph P Jr
Joe Jr was being groomed as the first Irish-Catholic president of the United States. He attended top schools, and his father laid the groundwork for him to become a congressmen of Massachusetts before America's entry into World War II. He served in the US Navy as a pilot during the war, flying B-24 bombers and died on duty in a plane explosion over Suffolk.

9. Patricia
Patricia entered the world of the media in 1945 as an assistant in NBC's production department in New York. She married Peter Lawford, the English actor connected to the 'rat pack' and various Hollywood movie stars including Marilyn Monroe. She divorced Lawford in 1966 after revelations about his affairs with other women, and later moved to New York, devoting herself to charitable causes. She died in 2006.

10. Robert
Robert followed Jack into politics, becoming Attorney General during the Kennedy administration and promoting civil rights. After Jack's death he too would bid for the presidency. He was assassinated during election season for the Democratic nomination in 1968.

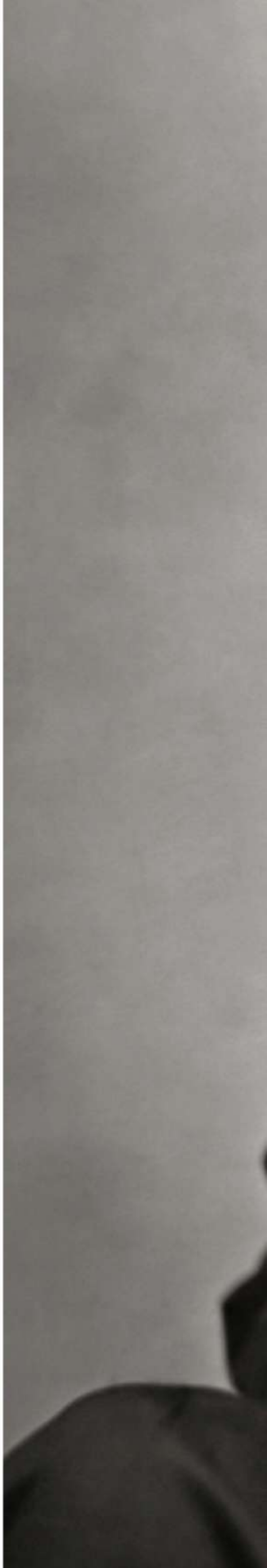
11. Kathleen
Kathleen married into English aristocracy after spending time in England when her father was Ambassador to Britain in the Forties. She married William Cavendish, the Marquess of Hartington. She became a journalist and volunteered her time in the British Red Cross before dying in a plane crash in 1948.

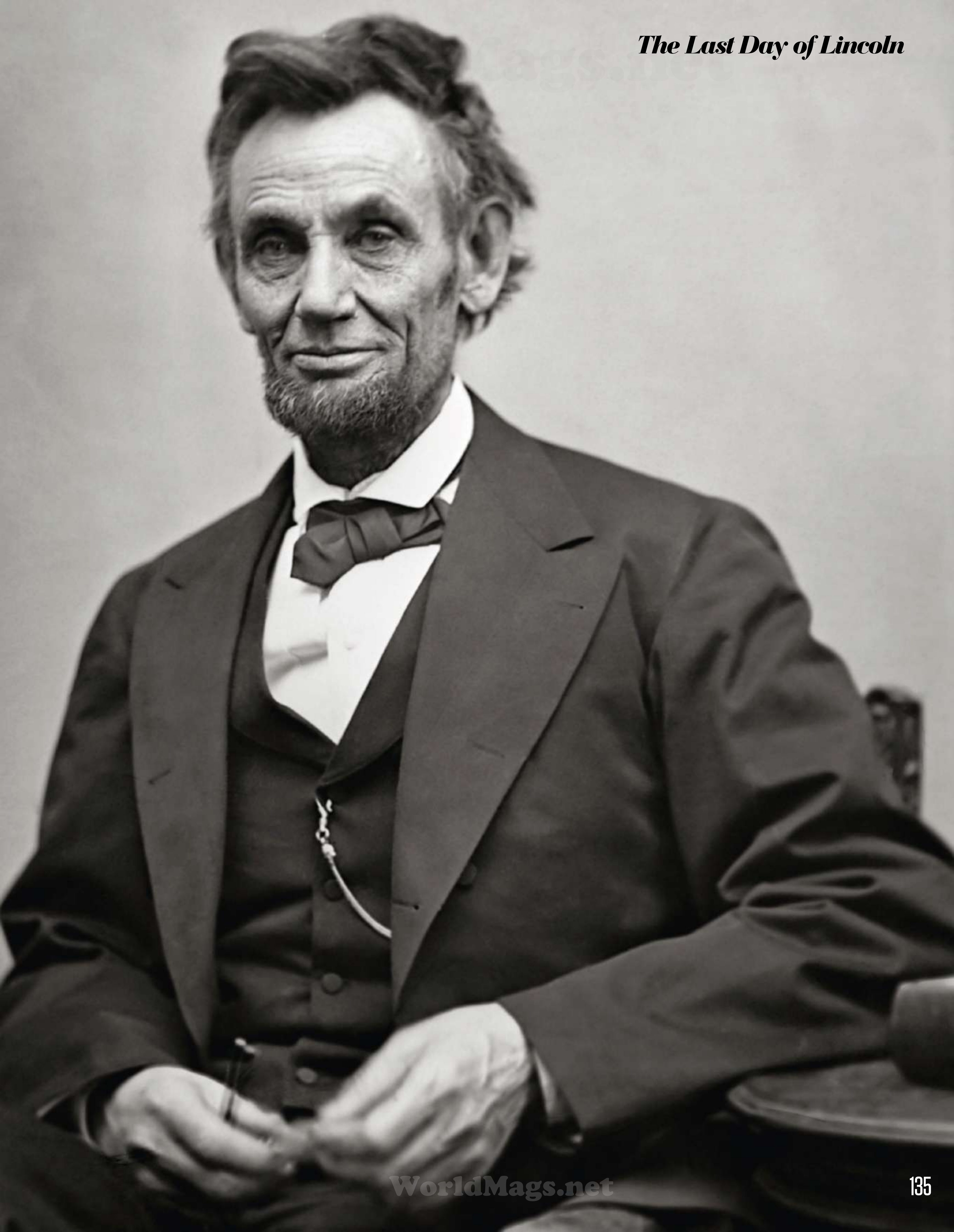
© Alamy; Getty; Corbis; Joe Cummings

The Last Day of Lincoln

‘A day is a long time in politics’, so the old saying goes. Policy can be formulated, speeches can be made, ideals can be realised. You can even, when the time is right, kill a President

On 9 April 1865 one of the most brutal and fiercely contested civil wars the Earth has ever seen came to a formal close in small, nondescript courthouse in Virginia. General Robert E Lee - leader of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia - was meeting with General Ulysses S Grant, the commander of the Union Army, to sign papers of surrender. The American Civil War between the United States of the Union in the North and the Confederate States of America in the South was officially over. Four years of blood, destruction and wildly differing ideologies of how the newly colonised landmass of North America should be modelled were over. The Confederacy had collapsed; the infrastructure of its southern states lay in ruins. After signing the papers Lee left Appomattox Courthouse and, rode off into the history of the United States. His role in the war was over and he lived out his days as President of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. In contrast, Grant began his journey back to Washington, the news of his victory advancing faster than any steam locomotive.





Our American Cousin

Among the horrific events of 14 April 1865, one thing tends to be overlooked. It's to do with the actual play that Lincoln was attending. The play, entitled Our American Cousin, is a three-act affair by English playwright Tom Taylor, who penned the piece in 1858, seven years prior to Lincoln's assassination. During this period the play received much critical and commercial success, touring America's theatres with a star-filled cast containing some of the best-known actors of the day.

Our American Cousin is a classic farce that traces the return to England of an honest and ignorant American named Asa Trenchard to claim his old family estate. Due to Trenchard's lack of understanding of the English aristocratic traits and manners, as well as his own rustic ways – in one scene, after being introduced to a shower for the first time he proceeds to shower fully clothed – much hilarity ensues, culminating in a series of marriages between the cast.

Famously, in Act III Scene 2 of play, Asa delivers what is considered the funniest line of the play to Mrs Mountchessington, an old aristocratic noblewoman who, despite considering Asa vulgar and not fit to enter the English aristocracy, in fact show herself to be rather rude and vulgar. The line says: "Don't know the manners of good society, eh? Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, old gal – you sockdologizing old man-trap."

Sockdologizing stems from 'socdollager', an uneducated man's misuse of 'doxology', which translates as 'giving praise'. Obviously, Asa is hardly granting Mountchessington praise, so the line comes off as ironic. It was during the laughter that followed this famous line that Booth entered Lincoln's box. Familiar with the play, he hoped the laughter would mask the sound of his gunshot.

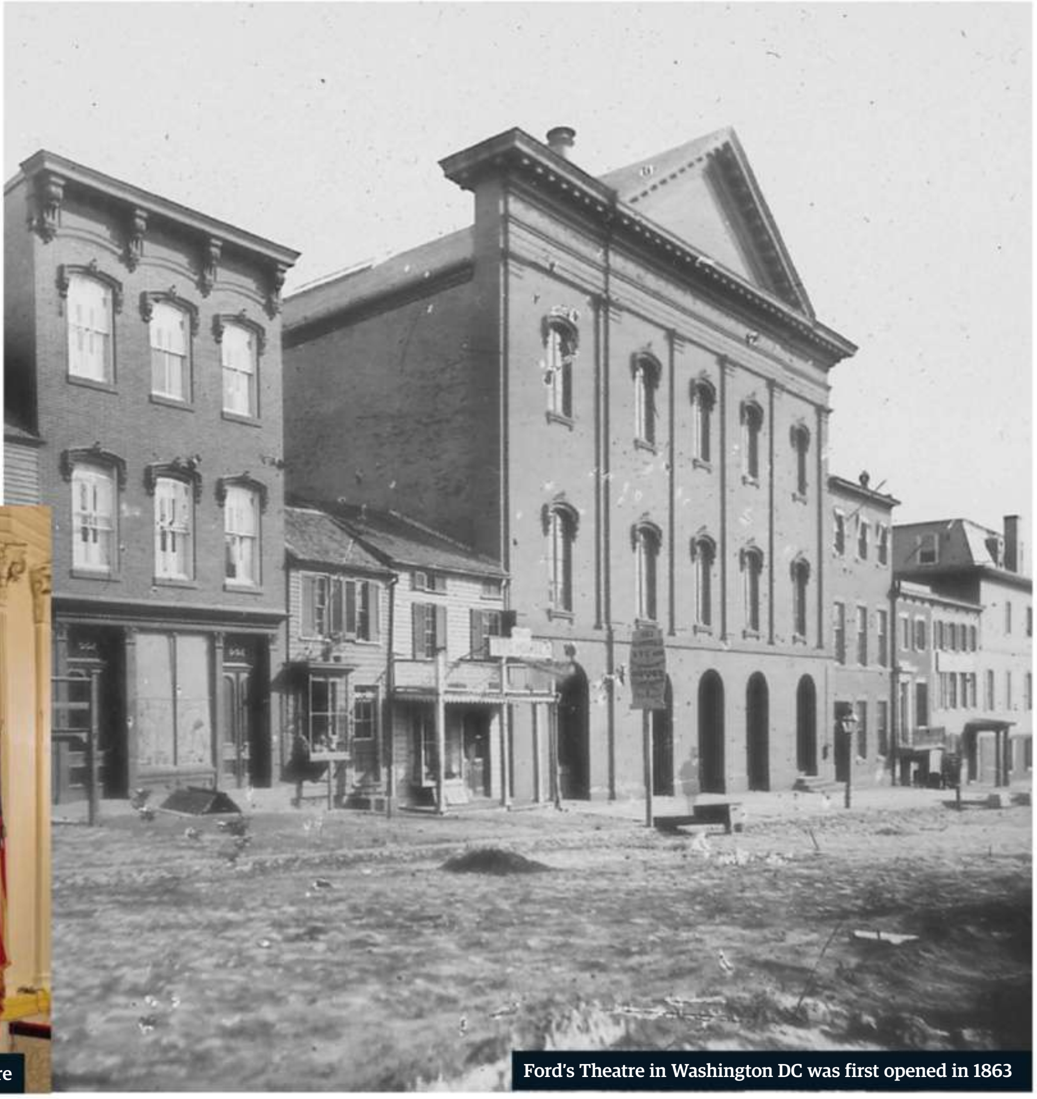
The Presidential Box where Lincoln was shot in Ford's Theatre

At 7am on Friday, 14 April 1865, Abraham Lincoln awoke to a glorious spring day, the weather echoing his desire that a brand new future could emerge from the darkness that had preceded it. Rising promptly and then proceeding to his office in the White House, Lincoln sat behind his large mahogany desk and proceeded to work. His workload was large. Affairs of state were both chaotic and pressing following the recent surrender of the Confederacy, with the rebuilding of the (now broken) nation top priority. After spending around half an hour attending to his paperwork, Lincoln reached for a nearby bell chord and pulled it to summon a personal secretary. Moments later the secretary entered the office and Lincoln relayed instructions that the Assistant Secretary of State, Frederick Seward, should call a cabinet meeting at 11:00am. Little could Lincoln know that, across the American capital, events were transpiring that would lead to this meeting being the last one that he ever chaired.

After working for another short period Lincoln left the office and proceeded to have breakfast with his family. Sitting around the breakfast table Lincoln was joined by his wife Mary Todd Lincoln and sons Robert and Tad Lincoln. While eating, Lincoln listened to his son Robert's account of General Robert E Lee's surrender at the Appomattox Courthouse.

Robert Lincoln was a Captain in the Union Army and was present when the papers were signed. While Mary had tickets to go to Grover's Theatre that evening, she wished to go and see the much-celebrated farce Our American Cousin at Ford's Theatre. She wanted to see the show with Union army General and war hero, General Ulysses S Grant and his wife, and she requested Lincoln to send an invite. This was a pivotal moment in

> "How could the Lincoln's have known what visiting Ford's Theatre instead of Grover's would lead to?"



Ford's Theatre in Washington DC was first opened in 1863 the history of one of the greatest events that the United States had ever seen – it was a moment in time, a snapshot into the chaos of cause and effect. How could the Lincoln's have known what visiting Ford's Theatre instead of Grover's would lead to?

After breakfasting Lincoln proceeded back to his office and received his first official appointment of the day, Speaker of the House of Representatives Schuyler Colfax. Colfax had come to talk to Lincoln about his intended future policy towards the (now surrendered) pro-Confederacy states, to which Lincoln held the view that they should be an active participant in any rebuilding effort and they should not be heavily penalised for their part in the war. After speaking with Colfax, Lincoln received New Hampshire Senator John P Hale, whose daughter Lucy Hale, had recently come into the spotlight by becoming the fiancée of famous stage actor John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln spoke to Hale about his new role as minister to Spain and after concluding their meeting sent for a courier and informed him to reserve the State Box at Ford's Theatre.

At 11am Lincoln proceeded into the Cabinet Office and began the scheduled meeting of the cabinet. On the agenda were two primary issues – the reconstruction of the country, and how to approach the reconciliation of the northern and southern states. Discussion between the cabinet members, which included General Grant and Edwin Stanton but not Vice-President Andrew Johnson, led to many differing opinions being expressed. However, by the close of the meeting at approximately 2:00pm the men were in general agreement. The southern states would be supported financially during the reconciliation and the leaders of the Confederacy would not be punished further. As the meeting drew to a close General Grant approached Lincoln and informed him that he and his wife could not attend Our American Cousin that evening as they were travelling out of Washington to see their children.

> "After spending most of his morning attending to national affairs, he still found time to resolve citizens' issues"

At 2:20pm Lincoln left the cabinet office and proceeded through the White House to have lunch with Mary. Informing her of General Grant's decline of their invitation, it was agreed that Edwin Stanton and his wife would be invited. Following lunch, which lasted till 3:00pm, Lincoln finally met with Vice-President Andrew Johnson, who had arrived to see Lincoln late while the Cabinet meeting was in effect. The President and Vice-President spoke for 20 minutes, discussing recent events and the outcomes of the meeting that Johnson had missed. After Johnson left, Lincoln undertook the last official engagement of his working day, meeting with a former slave named Nancy Bushrod. The meeting was about Nancy's husband, who had served in the Union Army but had not been paid for the last few months. Lincoln promised her that he would resolve the matter. This typified the great man. After spending most of his morning

The life of Lincoln

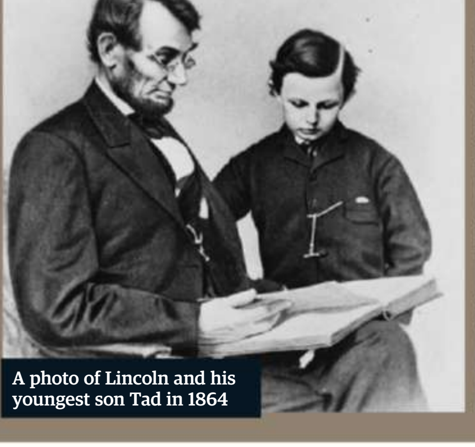
Abraham Lincoln was born on 12 February 1809 in Hardin County, Kentucky to Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks Lincoln. His youth was a troubled one. He had two siblings, an older sister Sarah and a younger brother Thomas, the latter of whom died as an infant. After a land dispute, the Lincolns were forced to move to Perry County, Indiana in 1817 and squat on public land. At the age of nine, his mother died of milk sickness.

After the family again migrated, this time to Illinois in 1830, Lincoln started to make a living splitting wood and as a shopkeeper. In 1837 he was admitted to the bar and became a lawyer, practising across Illinois until the mid-1840s. In 1842 he married Mary Todd, with whom he had four children (though only one, Robert, survived to maturity). He entered politics briefly in 1847, serving a single two-year term in the House of Representatives, but returned to law in 1849.

It was not until 1856 that Lincoln would again become involved in politics, joining the newly formed Republican Party. After unsuccessfully running for the Senate, Lincoln was nominated as the Republican candidate for the presidency in May 1860 and in November of that year he was elected as the 16th President of the United States.

Prior to Lincoln's inauguration in March 1861, several Southern states had begun to secede from the Union. Following an attack by the South on Fort Sumter in South Carolina, Lincoln was forced to lead the North into the American Civil War with the South. After a successful military campaign, Lincoln was re-elected in 1864. His goal to reunify the country was curtailed when he was assassinated, but his legacy as one of America's greatest leaders will forever be remembered.

A huge crowd gathered for Lincoln's first inauguration on 4 March 1861



A photo of Lincoln and his youngest son Tad in 1864

"Stepping late into the President's box, the show was halted, Hail to the Chief was played by the orchestra"

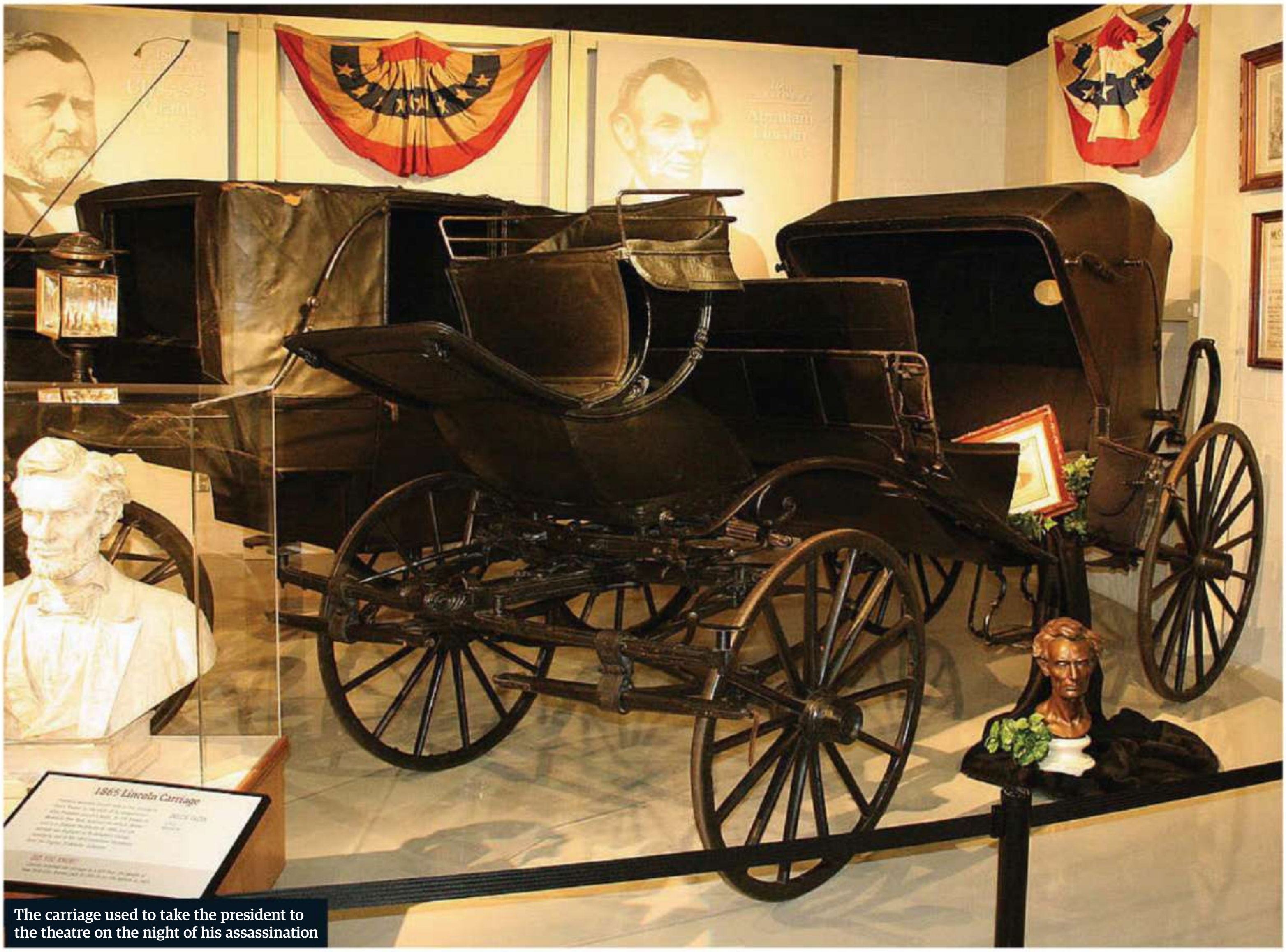
attending to affairs that concerned an entire nation, he still found time to meet with and resolve one citizen's issues.

As the meeting with Nancy concluded, a messenger arrived at the White House stating that the Stantons had declined the offer to attend the theatre with the Lincolns that evening. He met with Mary and informed her of the news and, with his day's work concluded at 4pm, decided to go out with her on a carriage ride. The ride, which took the pair down to the Washington Naval Yard and back again took approximately two hours, with the Lincoln's arriving back at the White House at 6pm. A pair of old friends met them as they arrived back and Lincoln proceeded to invite them into his office for a catch-up. Shortly after, however, Lincoln received notification that the family meal was ready. After saying goodbye to his visitors, he proceeded with his family to the dining room. It was at this dinner that Mary informed Lincoln that they had finally received an acceptance to attend the theatre, with Major Henry Rathbone and his partner Clara Harris accepting.

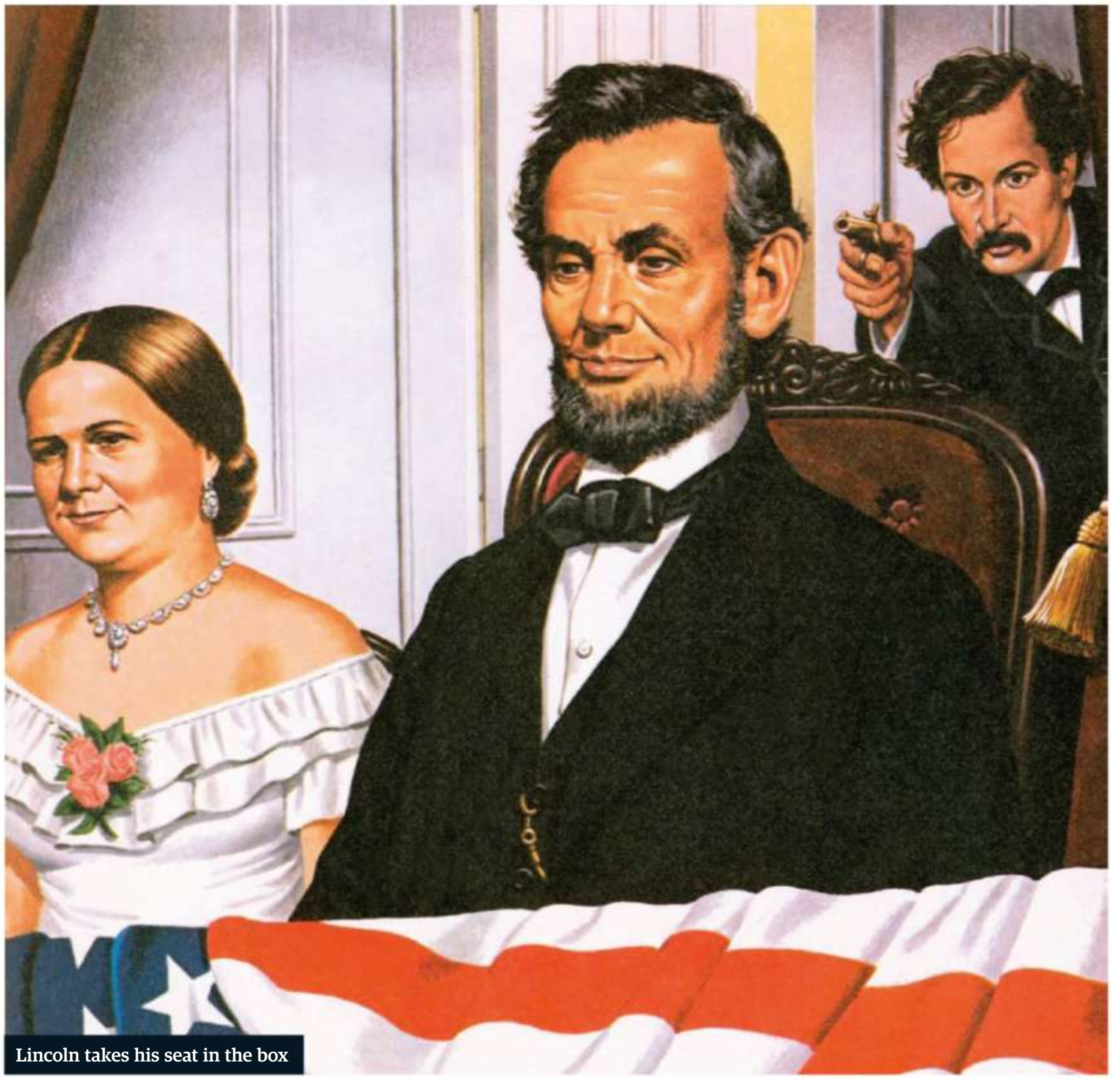
After finishing their meal, Mary returned to her room to get ready for the theatre, while Lincoln was unexpectedly called on by former Congressman George Ashmun. Ashmun had no appointment but Lincoln met with him anyway. By 8:05pm Lincoln was still in conversation with Ashmun and, fearing he would arrive too late to the show, requested the meeting be recommenced at 9am the following morning. Lincoln quickly penned a note saying that Ashmun was to be allowed entry the following morning and then proceeded to leave the White House with Mary in a waiting carriage.

The carriage proceeded down the gravel drive of the White House and then continued toward town. After swinging by 712 Jackson Place in Lafayette Square to pick up Major Rathbone and Harris, the Lincoln carriage then made a beeline for Ford's Theatre. The President of the United States then went to see a play.

Stepping late into the President's box, the show was halted, Hail to the Chief was played by the orchestra, and then over a thousand theatre goers applauded the great man and his, now realised beyond doubt, ideology that America would be reborn anew, greater and stronger than ever before. Taking their seats once more after the President and his entourage were seated, the audience remained unaware that a drama of far greater significance than anything a comic farce could conjure, was about to play out dramatically before their very eyes.



The carriage used to take the president to the theatre on the night of his assassination



Lincoln takes his seat in the box

Lincoln's nightmare

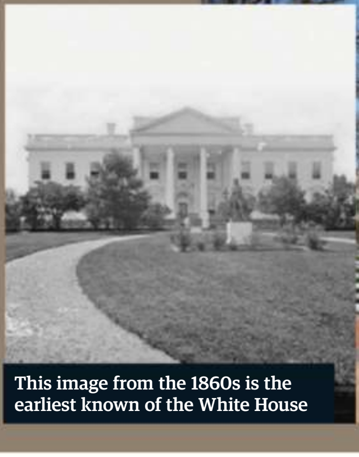
According to Lincoln's friend Ward Hill Lamon, three days prior to his assassination on 14 April the President recounted a strange dream he had had the previous week. Lamon retells the tale in his biography of Lincoln entitled *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln 1847-1865* and describes how Lincoln stated that in his dream he awoke in the White House to the sound of weeping emanating from somewhere in the building. After progressing from room to room and finding 'no living person in sight', Lincoln entered the East Room and discovered a large catafalque with a corpse laying upon it shrouded in funeral vestments. Surrounding the scene were a selection of soldiers and large group of mourners, who were the source of the sobbing. Lincoln accounts that in his dream he approached the corpse and asked one of the soldiers "Who is dead in the White House?" After a pause the soldier replied, "The President, he was killed by an assassin."

While many commentators in the past have added prophetic qualities to this event, which relies entirely on Lamon's testimony, in reality it merely shows the great and very real strain the President was under at the time. Numerous real-life death threats had been received by the President and, with the tumultuous state of America following the bloody and destructive civil war, his death had been, for many years, a very real possibility. Lincoln would never know the timeliness of his dream, and that after recounting it to Lamon within three days he would be indeed assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

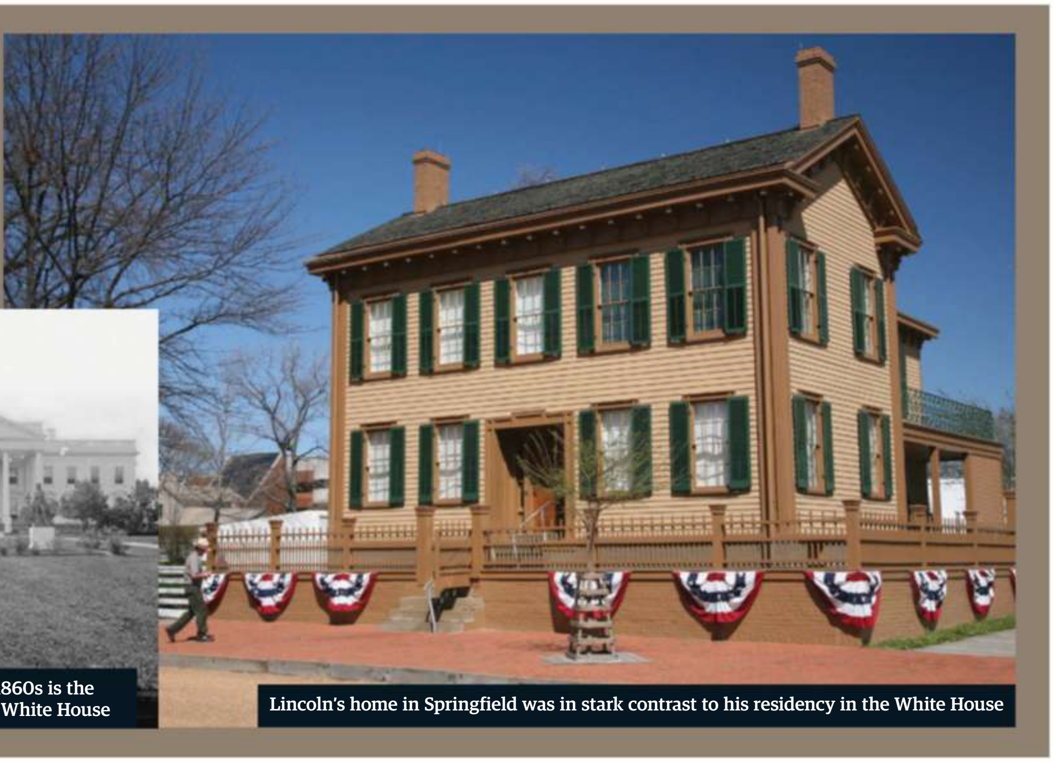
Lincoln's White House

Having been brought up in a rather modest wooden cottage in Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln never quite grew accustomed to his extravagant lodgings in the White House. This iconic building had few aesthetic differences in 1865 to the one that exists today - save for the omission of the West Wing and Oval Office, both of which were built at the start of the 20th Century.

President Lincoln's approachable nature meant that he would entertain visitors of any social class at all hours, often receiving people wearing nothing but his dressing gown and slippers. This was typified by his final day when, even with all the goings-on around him, he still found time to shake the hand of a one-armed soldier who had been waiting outside the White House to meet the President himself.



This image from the 1860s is the earliest known of the White House



Lincoln's home in Springfield was in stark contrast to his residency in the White House

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KINGS & QUEENS

The monarchs who ruled with force, who were intent on leading their countries to greatness

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The most famous Christian king of the medieval period

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A king who would change the laws and enter wars to get his way

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King Richard the Lionheart

Richard the Lionheart was the most famous Christian king of the Medieval period, waging a religious war against the Muslim East, attempting to conquer the Holy Land and Kingdom of Jerusalem

One of the most bloodthirsty, tactically astute and arguably wise kings that England ever saw, King Richard I - famously known as Richard the Lionheart - took the military might of the Medieval Christian West into the heart of the Islamic East in order to re-conquer the Holy Land (Palestine) from the Sultan of Syria, Saladin. Indeed, with his Third Crusade - often referred to as 'Richard's Crusade' - the English King led literally thousands of knights thousands of miles into a territory that had long been fraught with religious tension and then, through a series of military victories, heightened those further, cutting a hole not just through the rival troops of Saladin but also through Islam itself.

For Richard though, the quest to the Holy Land was but part of a life that was characterised by conflict and combat, with him born into one of the most infamous dynasties in Europe, the House of Plantagenet. Son of King Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard was born into a family famous for feuding, with his father's legacy of fighting with all and sundry, including his own wife who he ended up imprisoning in a house-arrest situation due to her strong influence over not just his sons but also many of the barons and nobility in England and specifically France. As such, it is no surprise that during his early years not only did he fight against his father but also, following the pair briefly reconciling, against his father's kingdom's own barons he put down a series of revolts.

Indeed, by the time Richard successfully took down the supposedly impregnable fortress of Taillebourg in the spring of 1179 while fighting rebels, he had won a reputation as a highly skilled military commander and fierce combatant, with an infamous reputation of cruelty and brutality against anyone who stood against him. His hunger for conquest however did not stop in defeating rebels; soon after the revolts had been quelled Richard challenging his father for the throne. This led Richard to end up not just fighting his father but also his brothers, with only the passing of his older brothers Henry and Geoffrey as well as eventually his father allowing him to ascend as King.

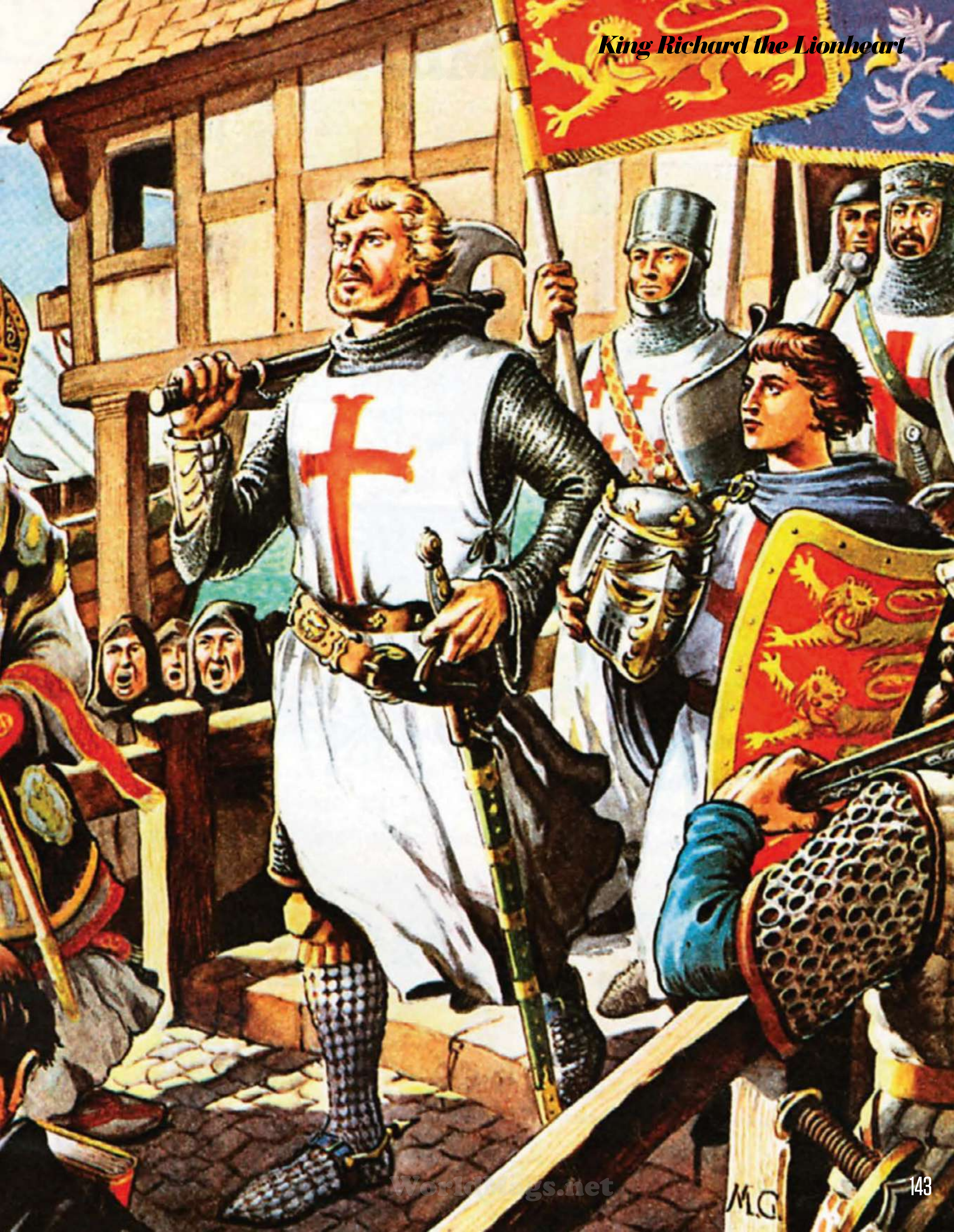
> "He led thousands of knights thousands of miles into a territory that had long been fraught with religious tension"

RICHARD I

England, 1157 – 1199

Brief Bio

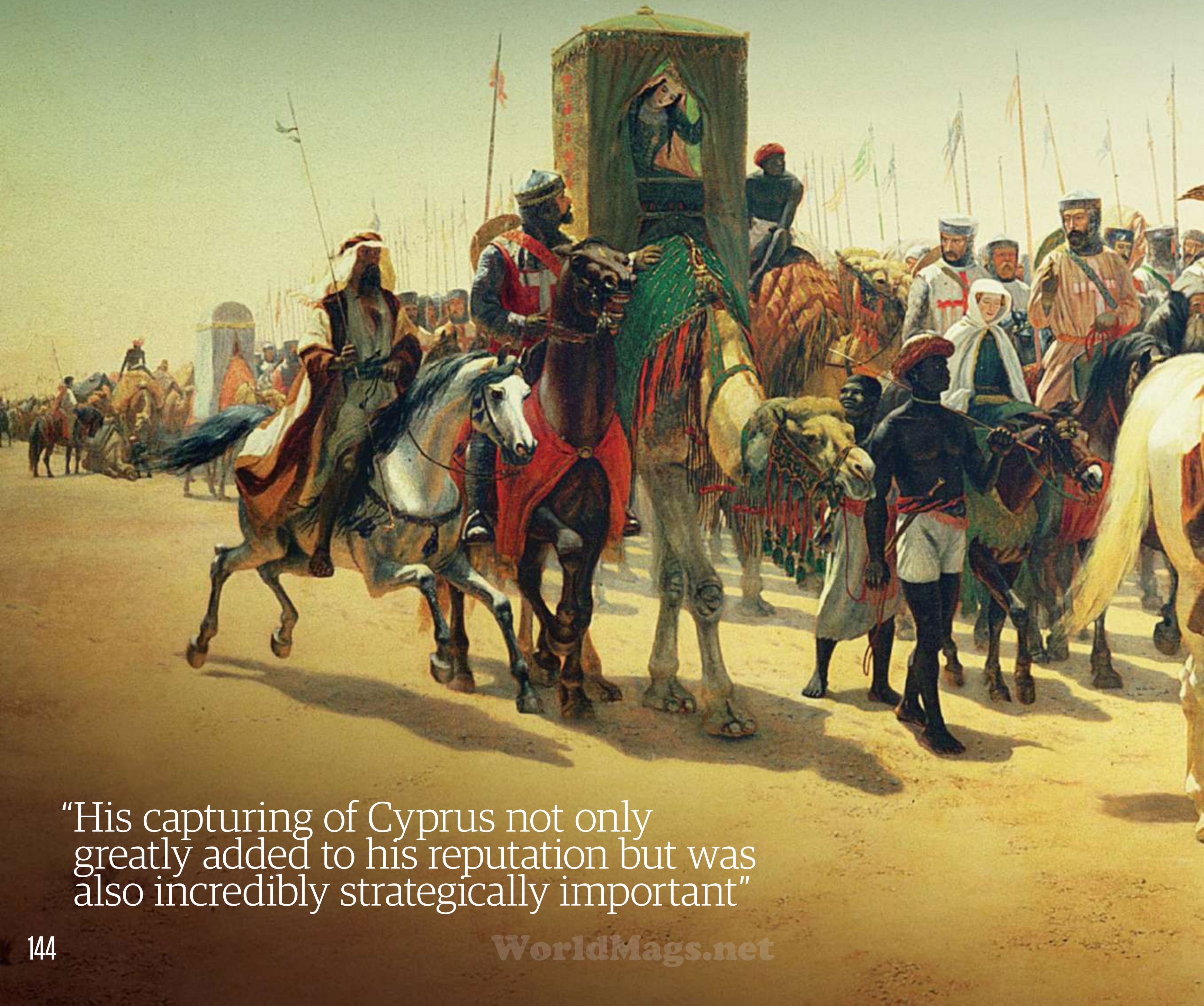
Nicknamed 'the Lionheart' for his ferocity and faith, the son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine was obsessed with the Crusades, prosecuting a holy war in the Middle East to achieve Christian control of the Holy Land, particularly Jerusalem. He figures in many myths, notably *Robin Hood*.


M.G.

Having been born in England, Richard was officially invested as Duke of Normandy and then crowned King of England on 3 September 1189 at Westminster Abbey. Now finally free from the constraints of fighting his family and the rebels in his territories in England and France, Richard was free to undertake what had, since 1187 when he had taken the Christian cross as Count of Poitou (something he had done to renounce his past wickedness) and Saladin had taken Jerusalem, been his primary aim, retake the Holy Land from the Muslamic infidels. The problem was, while Richard's will and desire for combat was unabated by years of conflict, his inherited kingdom was not, with the royal coffers largely empty.

Richard therefore immediately set about raising the necessary funds to launch his own crusader army. Firstly, he agreed with King Philip II of France to undertake the crusade jointly - with both leaders scared that if one left Europe then the other would invade his territories - and then proceeded to raise taxes in England, free King William I of Scotland from his oath of subservience in exchange for 10,000 marks, and sell much land and property, with the proceeds being funnelled into assembling an army of 4,000 knights, 4,000 foot-soldiers and a huge fleet of ships. At one point Richard reportedly said that 'I would have sold London if I could find a buyer', so determined was he to proceed on the Third Crusade. This large army was to travel with Phillip's to Palestine and retake Jerusalem at any cost. Boarding his flagship, Richard I left England in the summer of 1190.

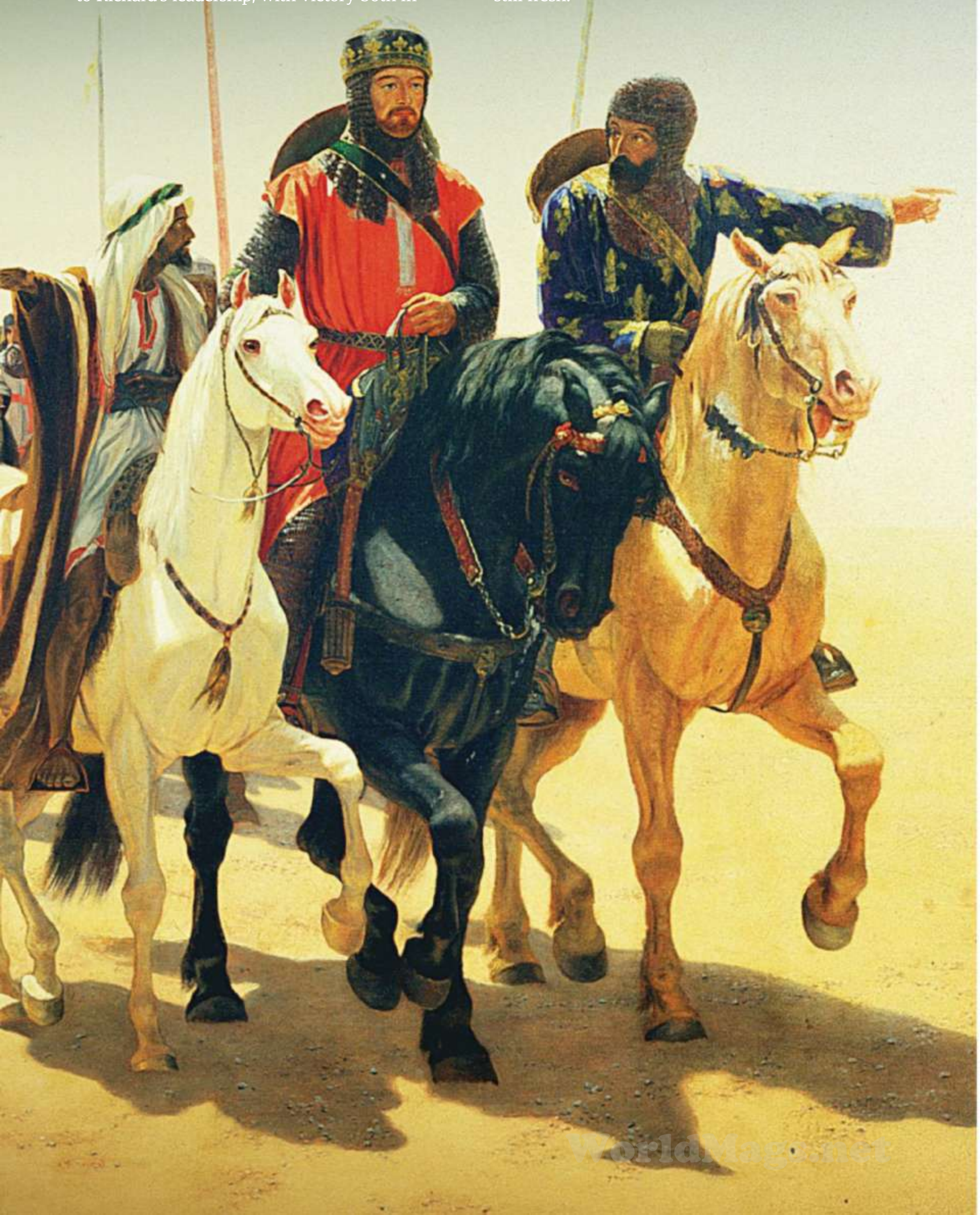
As can be seen in greater detail in the column on the right, his passage to the Holy Land was eventful, with him first stopping in Sicily - where he famously freed his sister from the usurper King Tancred I - but then also conquered the entirety of the island nation of Cyprus, overthrowing the despot ruler Isaac Komnenos and installing Richard de Camville and Robert of Thornham as its governors (interestingly he later sold the island to the Knights Templar, where it was then sold to Guy of Lusignan, one of Richard's fellow crusaders). Indeed, while as we shall see, Richard made many conquests in the Holy Land, his capturing of Cyprus not only greatly added to his reputation but was also strategically incredibly important, allowing the waters on the approach to Palestine to be controlled by Christian forces.



"His capturing of Cyprus not only greatly added to his reputation but was also incredibly strategically important"

Despite multiple conquests and himself even getting married on his journey into the East, Richard eventually arrived in the Holy Land at the city of Acre on 8 June 1191. He immediately joined forces with Guy of Lusignan and Conrad of Montferrat and took the city in the now-famous 1191 Siege of Acre. As his and his allies' flags were raised above the city, Richard's Crusade had well and truly begun, with what was to be t he first of several victorious conquests now firmly under his belt. Buoyed by his victory, Richard soon left Acre and marched south with his Crusader army, fearing that if Jerusalem was to be taken then this military momentum needed to be maintained.

Momentum was indeed maintained thanks to Richard's leadership, with victory both in the Battle of Arsuf and at Beit Nuba, leaving the Crusader army a mere 12 miles from their ultimate destination of Jerusalem. By this point, Richard's multiple victories had left morale in Saladin's forces low and it has since been postulated that if the army had directly besieged the city it would have fallen to them quickly. However, news of a possible Muslim relief army and poor weather led to Richard ordering the army to retreat back toward the coast, with him fearing that if they tried to take the city right now they might become trapped and wiped out. Returning to the captured city of Ascalon, Richard fortified his position. It was here where he would make the first of multiple negotiations with Saladin, however at this stage they were unsuccessful, with the invasion still fresh.



The lion roars: Richard's top five victories

Messina (4 October 1190)

Arriving in Sicily to see his sister, Queen Joan, freed from prison, he proceeded to attack and capture the historic city of Messina. After looting it of every penny and burning it to the ground, Richard set up his base there, eventually forcing Joan's captor Tancred to sign a treaty ensuring Joan's release, an inheritance of 20,000 ounces of gold, and his nephew Arthur of Brittany enshrined as Tancred's heir. Richard proceeded to spend much of the year in Sicily.

Cyprus (1 May 1191)

Heading for Acre, a storm disrupted it and many ships landed on the south coast of Cyprus. Cyprus' despot ruler Isaac Komnenos proceeded to take Richard's sister prisoner. Richard, having finally discovered the stricken ships, arrived at the port of Lemesos and demanded his troops and sister to be released. Komnenos refused and so Richard landed his army, took the port and then the entire island nation, capturing Isaac and placing him in silver chains (the chains were silver as he promised not to place him in irons).

Acre (July 1191)

After landing in the Holy Land on 8 June, two weeks after his travelling companion Philip of Alsace, Richard proceeded to join him in the now famous siege of Acre. Richard finally secured the city's surrender on 12 July after weeks of combat, with the Christian troops entering the city and imprisoning the Muslim garrison. Richard, along with fellow Crusader Conrad of Montferrat, raised the banners of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, France, England and the Duchy of Austria.

Arsuf (7 September 1191)

Having left Acre, Richard proceeded south and was engaged by Saladin's forces at Arsuf in Palestine. Following a series of attacks by Saladin's forces, Richard charged the main body of Saladin's troops in a bold counter attack that broke their ranks. Importantly, while this victory gained Richard no resources, it did result in the coastal area of southern Palestine falling to him, making an assault on Jerusalem possible.

Jaffa (8 August 1192)

Richard lead a daring assault on the besieged city of Jaffa, which had been taken a month earlier by Saladin. Leading just 54 knights, a few hundred infantry and about 2,000 crossbowmen into battle, Richard caused the city's Muslim garrison to panic and then flee from the city, with Saladin himself unable to regroup them until they were five miles away. Saladin attempted a counter-attack, but it was in vain, his forces exhausted from years of warfare. After this battle that a peace treaty was agreed on by Richard and Saladin.

In June of 1192, Richard's Crusader army once more advanced towards Jerusalem, an action catalysed by the assassination of Conrad of Montferrat by the Hashshashin, an elite group of Islamic assassins. This time the Crusader army came in sight of the great city, however, due to disagreements between its component leaders on how best to proceed - Richard and the bulk of the crusading leaders wanted to force Saladin to hand over Jerusalem by attacking his base of power in Egypt, while the French Duke of Burgundy wished to make a direct attack on the city - they were once more forced to make a tactical retreat. Saladin attempted to punish the crusader's indecision by attacking them in a series of harassing running engagements, however the army stood strong and following another decisive victory at the Battle of Jaffa on 8 August 1192, both Saladin's and Richard's armies were heavily depleted.

A stalemate of inactivity ensued, with both Richard and Saladin realising their positions within Palestine were fragile and that continued fighting was unattainable. Another bout of negotiations between the two leaders proceeded and - as can be seen in greater detail in 'Richard VS Saladin: An Eternal War' to the right - finally a peace treaty was agreed upon on 2 September 1192. The treaty decreed that Richard would not take Jerusalem, however Christian pilgrims and merchants would be now free to enter the Muslim-held city as they wished completely lawfully. This would be how the Third Christian Crusade would come to an end, with Richard soon after departing the Holy Land for his homeland.

The story of Richard's Crusade, however, was not quite over with his departure from Palestine. His ship wrecked near Aquileia, Italy, and forced him to return over land through central Europe. It was during this land voyage that, as he passed by Vienna shortly before Christmas 1192, he was captured by the forces of Leopold V, Duke of Austria, who accused Richard of arranging the murder of his cousin Conrad of Montferrat by assassins back in the Holy Land. Richard proclaimed his innocence, but it was ignored by the Duke and Richard was imprisoned in Dürnstein Castle by the Duke, an action that saw him excommunicated by the pope. Regardless of the excommunication, Leopold V handed Richard over to Henry VI, the Holy Roman Emperor, who then

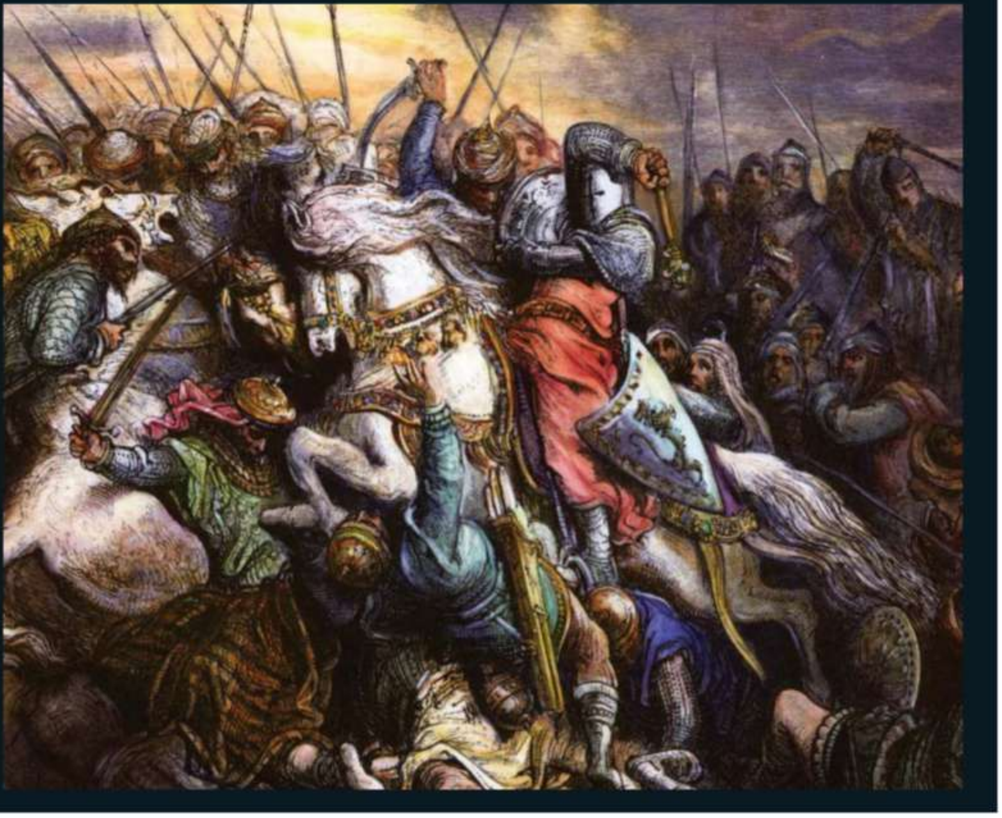
Richard vs Saladin: An Eternal War

Richard's crusade was one of the most personal of all, with what began as a duel of religions evolving into one between two of history's greatest leaders

While the Third Crusade was in fact one of the most complicated in terms of participants, with everyone from Philip II of France through to the Italian Conrad of Monteferrat and Guy of Luisgnan taking up arms to take the Holy Land, it was largely determined and eventually ended by just two men, King Richard I of England and Sultan of Syria Saladin. Indeed, some with the pair directing troops from afar, Richard and Saladin clashed more than ten times during the Third Crusade, with both taking or retaking territory in a continuous tug of war throughout the Palestine region. In the Battles of Arsuf and Jaffa both men were active participants in the field, with both winning much renown for their personal combat prowess.

Interestingly, however, while both Richard and Saladin spent much of the Third Crusade directing combat against each other, they were reportedly also great admirers of each other's abilities and met multiple times during the hostilities in attempts to negotiate over matters. In fact, it was through one of these negotiations after the Battle of Jaffa that the Third Crusade finally came to an end, with Richard agreeing to demilitarise Christian-controlled regions and Saladin ensuring that Christian pilgrims and merchants could have access to Jerusalem. Military historians often point to Richard and Saladin's relationship as a key factor in more bloodshed not being spilt, arguably without their work the Third Crusade would have been prolonged.

As a footnote, little more than six months after Richard the Lionheart left the Holy Land after the two great men had agreed on a peace treaty, Saladin died of fever on 4 March 1193 in Damascus. As with Richard, who would return slowly to his homeland without wealth or ceremony, Saladin himself died with only one piece of gold and 40 pieces of silver to his name, the rest given away to his subjects or spent on the proceeding years of war. Clearly, for peace – no matter how temporary – it was a price worth paying.



Timeline

1157

Richard born
Richard is born at Beaumont Palace, Oxford, England as the son of King Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. He is one of four brothers including Henry, Geoffrey and John.
8 September 1157

Aquitaine gained
Following him turning ten, Richard is invested with the duchy of Aquitaine and then, four years later, the duchy of Poitiers.
1168

Richard argues
After arguing with his brothers, Richard joins his forces with those of his father to subdue Henry, Geoffrey and their rebelling barons.
1179

Henry dies
Henry II's rightful heir to the throne – Henry the Young King – dies of dysentery, leaving Richard to become the rightful heir. Three years later Richard's other brother, Geoffrey, dies in a tournament.
1183

Richard crowned
Following the death of Henry II at Chateau Chinon, Richard is crowned King in Westminster Abbey, England.
3 September 1189

Fire sale
Having heard of Saladin's capture of Jerusalem, Richard begins raising funds for his crusade by selling off castles and territory in his control.
11 December 1189

> "Returning to England, Richard found that his brother had tried to take the throne with the help of the French King Philip"

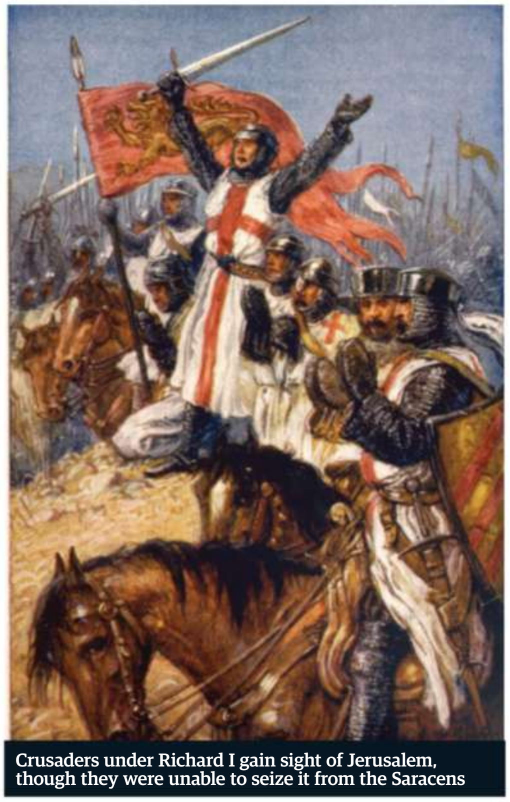
held him to ransom, demanding 150,000 marks for Richard's release.

His mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine proceeded to raise the large sum, though it took almost two years, with Richard only finally being freed on 4 February 1194. Upon returning to England and France, Richard found that his brother John had tried to take the throne with the help of French King Philip and that much of his territory in Normandy had been taken. He immediately began a campaign of reconquest, forming an alliance against King Philip and then beating him in multiple battles throughout the 1190s, the most famous being the Battle of Gisors, a conflict in which Richard coined the now famous motto of the British monarchy 'Dieu et mon Droit', which translates as 'God and my Right', an indication that the monarch only answers to God.

As is related in 'Death in his mother's arms' to the right, this new campaign of conquest would end with Richard's own death, which came from a very unlikely source. Regardless though, upon his death his was eventually succeeded by his brother John, who would proceed to lose almost all of Richard's territory in mainland Europe and then go on to lose much more power by losing the First Baron's War in 1217, the latter leading to the creation of the Magna Carta. Indeed, following Richard's death on 6 April 1199, no king of England ever held as much power or territory than he did during his reign.

So what of Richard's legacy? One of the most powerful Kings of England in the country's long history, Richard was born into a firmly established - albeit warring - empire where the monarch's position as ruler was unquestionable. He was, as he said himself, answerable to no one but the Christian God and held the military might and privilege to do as he wished on Earth. Despite the romance surrounding his famous Crusade, as well as the scandalous family politics that coloured his life and his favourable rule when compared to his brother John, it can be easily argued that the legacy left by Richard is not a positive one, with him spending vast sums of his subjects' money on a series of wars either for his own personal gain or in the pursuit of religious zealotry and intolerance.

But perhaps that is to look upon Richard's actions with a modern perspective, one that is wholly unsuitable to decode the motives and mindset of the Medieval world. There is no doubt about it, life and death were very much part of the same blade during Richard's rule, with those who did not adequately defend themselves put to the sword for no fault of their own aside from that they stood in someone else's way. Regardless of his legacy though, one thing is clear, Richard's actions had a marked effect not just on Europe but on the western Middle East too, one that can still be seen today if you look in the right places.



Crusaders under Richard I gain sight of Jerusalem, though they were unable to seize it from the Saracens

Death in his mother's arms

The climactic events of Richard the Lionheart's death

In March 1199, long after the Third Crusade had come to a close, Richard was back in Limousin, suppressing a revolt against his rule by Viscount Aimar V of Limoges. Burning the count's land and cutting through his troops, Richard finally arrived at the small and barely defended castle of Chalus-Chabrol, and he set about besieging it. On the evening of the 25 March, Richard was walking around the castle's perimeter investigating the progress that his sappers were making on the castle walls. He was walking unarmoured and, despite missiles occasionally being fired down, they were given little attention, with Richard even amused by the amateur state of the castle's defenders, applauding when they aimed at him.

For Richard however, this was to be the beginning of the end, with another unseen bowmen shooting and finally hitting Richard in the left shoulder near the neck. Richard, who despite being hit, walked to his tent and attempted to remove the bolt. However, he failed and only after a surgeon had come was the bolt finally removed. The would quickly became gangrenous and upon realising that his life was soon to end Richard called for the now-captured crossbowmen to be brought to him. The crossbowman was not a man but just a boy, who told Richard that he had acted out of revenge for the death of his father and two brothers, both of whom had been killed by the king's forces. Expecting to be executed however, the boy was then surprised by the weak and dying King Richard who, in what was to be his last act of mercy on Earth, forgave the boy and pardoned him, famously stating 'Live on, and by my bounty behold the light of day."

Less than two weeks later, King Richard the Lionheart died at the age of 41, his mother – the long-lived Eleanor of Aquitaine – holding him as he passed. His entrails were then burried at Chalus, his body at the feet of his father's at Fontevraud Abbey in Anjou and his heart in Rouen Normandy.

Crusade begins
King Richard finally embarks on his crusade, setting sail for the Holy Land. His first port of call is Sicily, arriving at Messina two months later.
4 July 1190

Queen maker
King Richard marries Queen Berengaria of Navarre, the first-born daughter of King Sancho VI of Navarre at Lemesos, Cyprus.
12 May 1191

Richard captured
After travelling back from his crusade, Richard is captured by the Duke of Austria, who he had supposedly offended during the Siege of Acre. He pays a ransom and is freed.
1192

1199

Richard dies
At the age of just 42, Richard the Lionheart dies at Chalus. His body is buried at Fontevraud Abbey in Anjou, while his heart is buried in Rouen in Normandy.
6 April 1199

© Look and Learn; Getty; Alamy

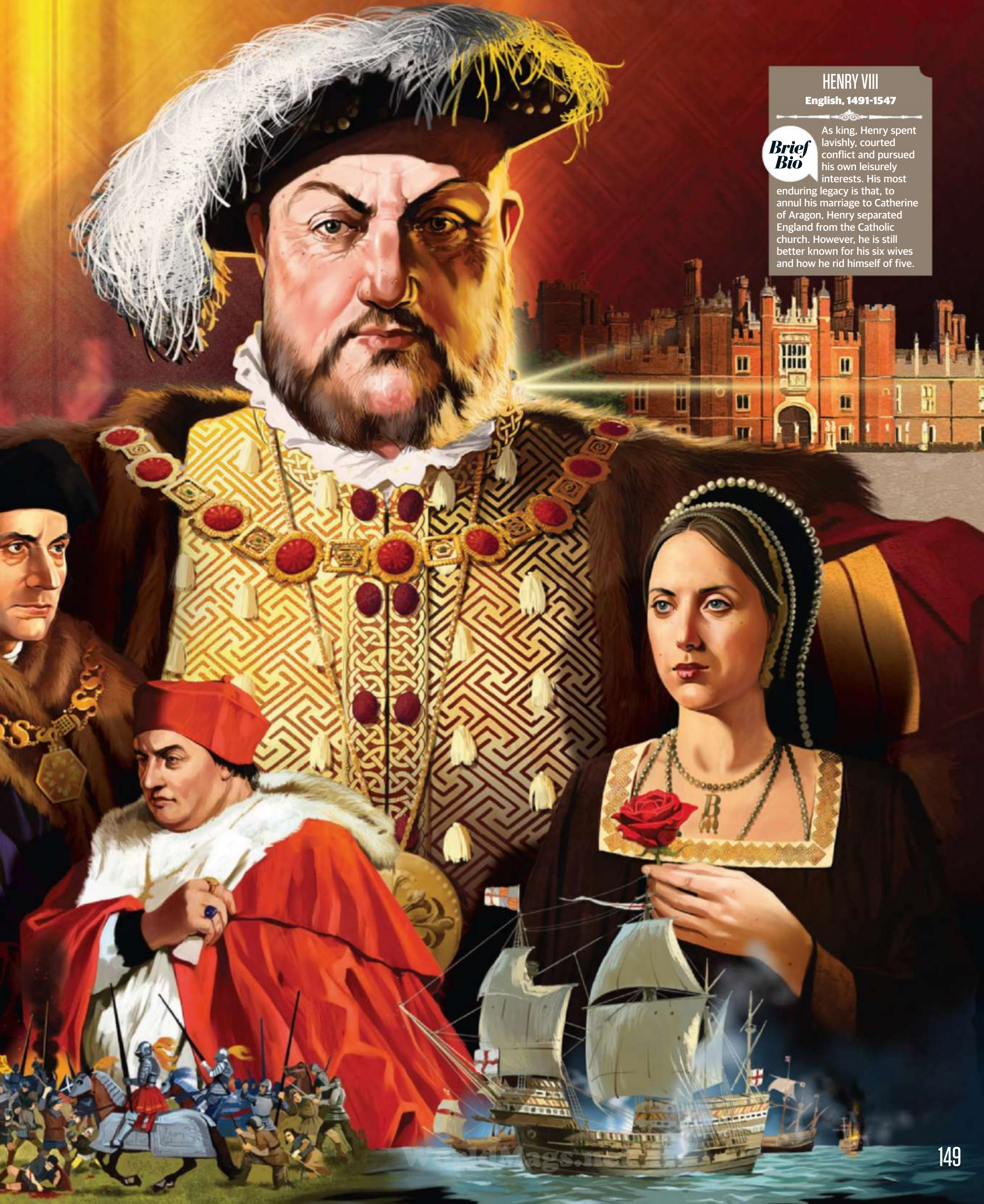
Henry VIII the Warlord

In pursuing dreams of victory in France, Henry threw England into decades of war and the chaos of a Europe in conflict

Henry VIII was born dreaming of war. When he took the throne in April 1509, with his bride Catherine of Aragon at his side, Henry knew exactly what kind of king he wanted to be. His would be a glorious reign that would restore England to the magnificence it deserved. His father, Henry VII, had become unpopular by levying punishing taxes to restore the country's finances, but the new king had no intention of focusing on matters as petty as the treasury. He would be a conqueror.

By the end of his life, Henry was a bloated and frustrated mockery of the athletic youth that he had once been. He had grown up jousting, riding and hunting, and would often participate in chivalry tournaments in disguise. He had grown up hearing the stories of the great Henry V – the hero of Agincourt – and had dreamed of the battles that years of peace had deprived him of. He was determined that he would repeat his ancestor's triumphs in France and expand England's territory beyond Calais – perhaps even as far as Paris. He wholly believed that France belonged to him and

> "By the end of his life, Henry was a bloated and frustrated mockery of the athletic youth that he had once been"



HENRY VIII

English, 1491-1547

Brief Bio

As king, Henry spent lavishly, courted conflict and pursued his own leisurely interests. His most enduring legacy is that, to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Henry separated England from the Catholic church. However, he is still better known for his six wives and how he rid himself of five.

– fortunately for the English monarch – he did not have to wait long to stake his claim.

Henry had grown up in years of stultifying peace thanks to his father's treaties with France and Aragon in Spain. Meanwhile, just across the Channel, the continent was in the throes of war. The powers of Europe clashed over the possession of Naples, essentially turning Italy into one big battleground. A quarrel over the region of Romagna had set Venice against the Vatican, and so Pope Julius II rallied France, the Holy Roman Empire and Spain (under Ferdinand II) in the final weeks of 1508, planning to split the Venetian territories among them.

Venice fell, but Julius feared French occupation of Italy. He mounted an impulsive attack on his allies which backfired as French forces stormed south in retaliation. A terrified Julius formed the Holy League, and Spain and the Holy Roman Empire sided with the papacy in 1511.

Henry VIII had now been on the throne for two years with his queen Catherine of Aragon (Ferdinand's daughter) at his side. A strong royal family was vital to his dream of a glorious England and he announced that he would marry her shortly after his father died. Catherine was fiercely loyal and determined to meet her king's expectations. She became pregnant almost immediately but their child was stillborn. It was a matter of weeks until Catherine was with child again, and she gave birth to a son, Henry, on New Year's Day, 1511. Sadly, Henry would survive for just seven weeks.

At this point, Henry was a young king just beginning his reign. He was the head of a proud royal family and he had shown his subjects that he was not the penny-pinching tyrant that his father was. The Holy League would enable him to serve his God and show France the power of England's might. The full force of that might would be delivered by Henry's expanding Royal Navy, which would boast the world's largest and most advanced warships. It is important not to underestimate the importance of the pope's blessing. He was still a devout Catholic and would go on to condemn the Protestant Martin Luther so harshly that the pope would give him the title 'Defender of the Faith'. His religion also included the concept of Divine Right; France was his God-given property. The Holy League should have been undefeatable.

> "Wolsey was the perfect right-hand man, able to counterbalance the king's violent rages with his own skilled diplomacy"

However, the first attack ended in disaster. An English force sailed to Gascony in June 1512, due to meet up with Ferdinand's army and claim the region of Aquitaine for Henry. Unfortunately, Ferdinand decided that he was more interested in claiming Navarre for himself and directed his troops in that direction. Ill-equipped and ravaged by dysentery, the English troops were forced to retreat. Henry was furious but resolute.

THOMAS WOLSEY

English, circa 1475-1530

Brief Bio

Cardinal Wolsey rose to power due to his ability to ensure that Henry got what he wanted. He was deeply ambitious and a skilled political operator. He became archbishop of York, and was made a cardinal and lord chancellor in 1515. He was instrumental in the peace process following Henry's first war in France, and often took public blame for Henry's mistakes. Wolsey's ambitions of becoming pope would be scuppered when Henry's determination to split from Catherine of Aragon destroyed England's relationship with Rome. Scrabbling to reconcile his position in Rome with his duty to his king, Wolsey's failure to deliver papal approval would prove to be his downfall.

Less than a year later, a second invasion plan was underway, with much of the organisation left in the hands of the invaluable Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. Wolsey was the perfect right-hand man for a king like Henry, able to counterbalance the king's violent rages with his own skilled diplomacy while sharing a similarly rabid ambition. Wolsey was a fixer; he made sure that whatever Henry wanted, Henry got. What Henry wanted was France, and so, in April 1513, an army was raised and an attack was made on Brest.

This incursion proved even more disastrous than the attempt on Aquitaine, but Henry would not be dissuaded and personally accompanied the English landing at Calais in June. With his feet on French soil and standing at the

Debacle at Gascony

June 1512

Henry's only concern prior to the expedition to Gascony was that he couldn't be there. It was the first attack on France during his reign and it should have been the first step in a glorious campaign. Henry was all too eager to ally himself with his father-in-law, Ferdinand II, who had similar ambitions to claim French territory. Both kings had joined the Holy League, which had been created in response to France's military activity in Italy. The League had decided that Ferdinand and Henry should attack together and it should have been an impressive display of force.

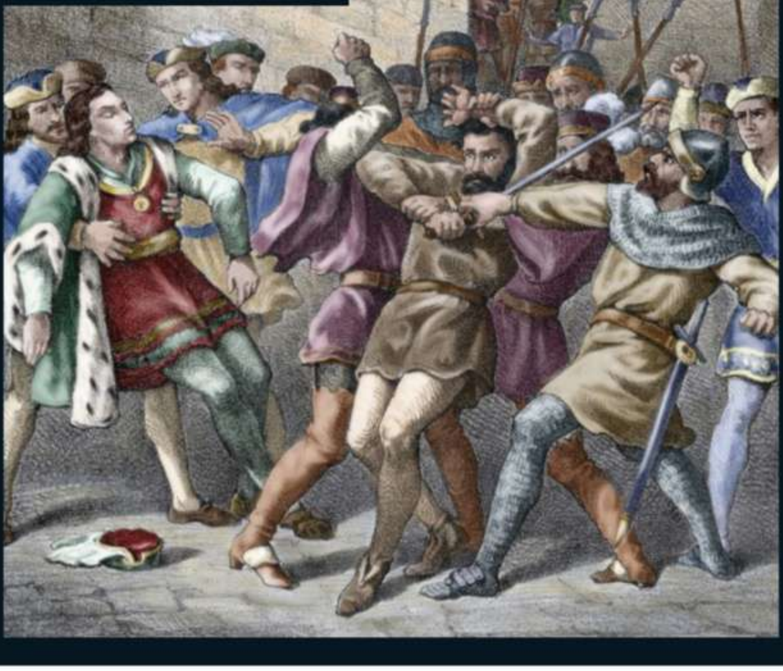
The Marquis of Dorset was given control of the English forces and the invaders were due to march with Ferdinand on Aquitaine. However, once the Marquis set foot on dry land, he discovered that the Spanish king had not kept his word. Instead, Ferdinand was occupied with his own attack on Navarre, which better served the Spanish king's own interests. The Marquis's troops quarrelled with the few Spanish forces that they had been given and many of his men succumbed to dysentery. As a result of all this, he had no choice but to retreat.

Although Henry can't be blamed for the failure of this attack, it shows the Holy League for what it really was. The kings were fighting with the pope's blessing and the glory of God, but they were all out for themselves. Once the fighting started, each monarch was really only interested in what land they could claim – their allies only functioned as a bank and backup.

Verdict

The forced retreat enraged Henry, pushing him towards leading his own attack, and also sowed the seeds of distrust that would come more prominently to the fore throughout his further campaigns

Ferdinand II of Aragon, depicted here surviving an assassination attempt in 1492, was a no-show when it came to marching on Aquitaine with England.



Victory at Flodden Field

9 September 1513

With the king's attention focused on France, the timing was ripe for an attack from the north. King Louis XII reached out to his ally in Scotland and James IV was very agreeable. He wrote to Henry instructing him to abandon his war on the French – an instruction that Henry roundly ignored. The Scottish troops rallied and marched south to the border, sending word that they intended to invade. Having appeased their sense of honour, they waited for the English troops at Flodden.

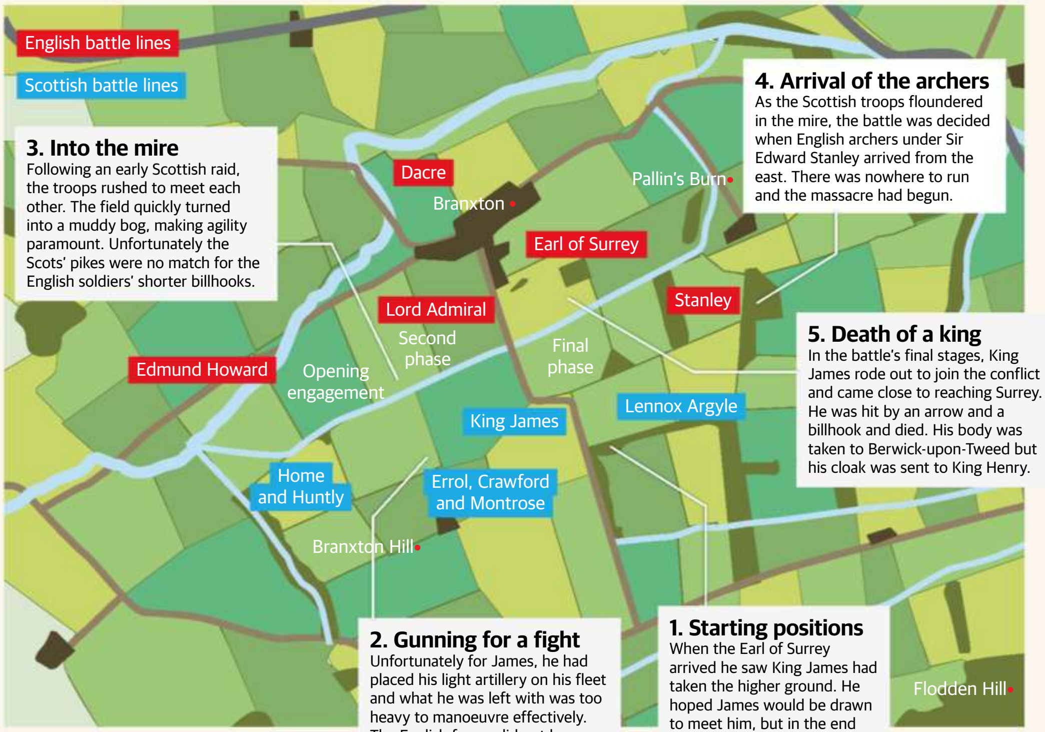
Catherine of Aragon was acting as regent while her husband was at war in France. Catherine was a woman who believed fiercely in duty, honour and loyalty, and the prospect of losing a battle in her husband's absence was too awful to even consider.

Together with the Earl of Surrey, Catherine raised an army from the Midlands to meet the Scottish invaders. Surrey met the Scottish army at Flodden Field and subjected them to a crushing defeat. The number of Scottish dead numbered in the thousands, and King James IV himself was among the fatalities.

While Henry's refusal to leave France may have been the final straw that prompted the attack, he had very little to do with the result of the battle – it was the Earl of Surrey who won the day. The Scottish king fell on the battlefield, and his cloak was sent to France as a trophy for Henry. A decisive victory, but not one which can be attributed to any military excellence on Henry's part.

Verdict

While the victory would assure Henry of England's military might, it was the start of a long and costly struggle with the Scots that would distract him from his goals in France.



1. Starting positions
When the Earl of Surrey arrived he saw King James had taken the higher ground. He hoped James would be drawn to meet him, but in the end Surrey flanked from the east and arrived from the north.

2. Gunning for a fight
Unfortunately for James, he had placed his light artillery on his fleet and what he was left with was too heavy to manoeuvre effectively. The English forces did not have this problem and promptly started their bombardment.

3. Into the mire
Following an early Scottish raid, the troops rushed to meet each other. The field quickly turned into a muddy bog, making agility paramount. Unfortunately the Scots' pikes were no match for the English soldiers' shorter billhooks.

4. Arrival of the archers
As the Scottish troops floundered in the mire, the battle was decided when English archers under Sir Edward Stanley arrived from the east. There was nowhere to run and the massacre had begun.

5. Death of a king
In the battle's final stages, King James rode out to join the conflict and came close to reaching Surrey. He was hit by an arrow and a billhook and died. His body was taken to Berwick-upon-Tweed but his cloak was sent to King Henry.

> "The Scottish king fell on the battlefield, and his cloak was sent to France as a trophy for Henry"

The Scottish army outnumbered the English by about 15,000 at Flodden, but some clever tactics won out.

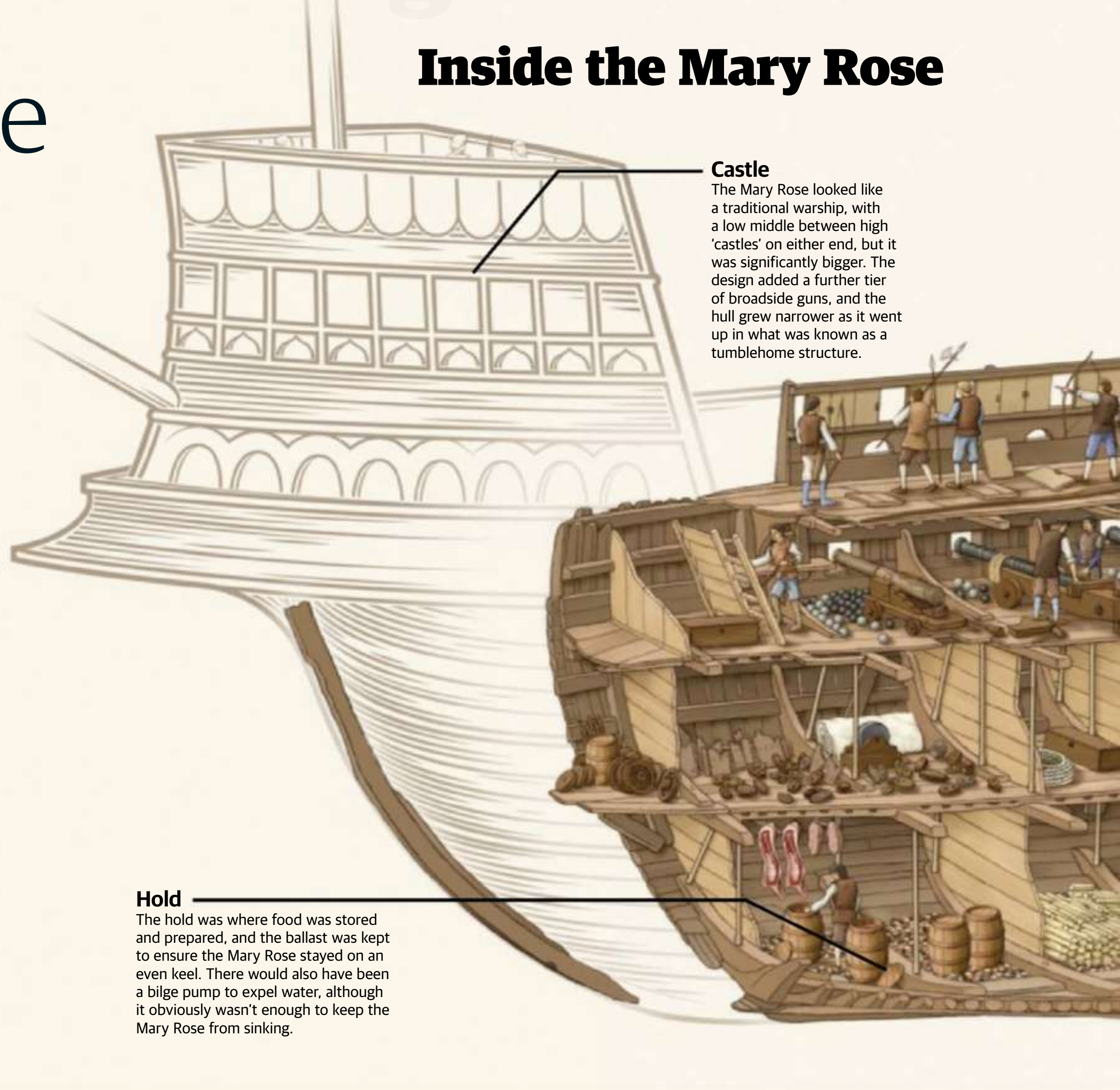
Father of the Royal Navy

Henry might be known as the founder of the Royal Navy but its creation had begun during the reign of Henry VII. Five royal warships had been built by the time Henry VIII took the throne, but the young king wanted more from his military might.

Henry knew that Scotland had invested in their own navy and that he was potentially facing a two-pronged attack by sea. Henry ordered the construction of two great warships: the infamous Mary Rose (which embarrassingly and mysteriously sank while leading the defence against the French at the Solent) and the Peter Pomegranate. Henry's ambition knew no limits and the English Navy would be the biggest, the most advanced and the most fearsome. He equipped his ships with the latest guns and the heaviest cannons, while employing new innovations like hinged gun ports. By the end of Henry's reign, his fleet numbered 58.

Enormous gunships aside, perhaps the most important innovations Henry made to the navy were on land. He created the first naval dock in Portsmouth, he gave the Grant of the Royal Charter to Trinity House (which developed beacons, buoys and lighthouses), and he created the Navy Board and the Office of Admiralty. Henry is known as the father of the Royal Navy because he didn't just bulk up its muscle, he created its backbone.

Inside the Mary Rose



Castle
The Mary Rose looked like a traditional warship, with a low middle between high 'castles' on either end, but it was significantly bigger. The design added a further tier of broadside guns, and the hull grew narrower as it went up in what was known as a tumblehome structure.

Hold
The hold was where food was stored and prepared, and the ballast was kept to ensure the Mary Rose stayed on an even keel. There would also have been a bilge pump to expel water, although it obviously wasn't enough to keep the Mary Rose from sinking.

head of an English army, Henry was exhilarated. He made straight for the town of Thérouanne and promptly laid siege to it. The Holy Roman Emperor and fellow Holy League leader, Maximilian, joined him soon afterwards, helping to assure Henry that he was on the side of the angels. Finally, Henry tasted glory on 16 August 1513 when the French attacked in the Battle of the Spurs. The light French cavalry were unable to withstand the combined forces of the invaders and fled. Henry claimed the day as a great victory, which was consolidated when Thérouanne surrendered on 22 August. The subsequent capture of Tournai was just as important to Henry, and he kept that town as an English stronghold while giving Thérouanne to Maximilian as a gesture of their allegiance.

What had Henry actually achieved? He'd taken two towns from the French, but Paris was a long way away. Nothing he'd done would tip the scales in either direction, but this was just the beginning. Henry was in his element. He was re-enacting the glories of Henry V and who knew how far he could go? Even as Henry celebrated his victories in France, trouble at home soon threatened to bring everything to a halt. All too aware of the English forces currently on their soil, the French reached out to King James IV of Scotland and suggested that this might be the perfect opportunity to mount an attack of their own. James marched south to Flodden Ridge with his armies to await the English.

While England may have seemed weak, Queen Catherine, acting as regent, had no intention of allowing such a challenge to go unanswered. An army was raised and met the Scots on 9 September. The English victory was brutally decisive and King James was killed. The gleeful queen sent the fallen monarch's bloody cloak to her husband in France, with the message: "In this your Grace shall see how I keep my promise, sending you for your banners a king's coat." Henry was conquering his enemies abroad, while his queen was seeing off attackers at home.

Sadly for the warrior king, peace was just around the corner, whether Henry wanted it or not. He had been acting as a war chest to his allies and England's coffers were so depleted that there was simply no way that he could carry on alone. He would have to make peace. The next few years presented Henry with a new potential ally, and a new enemy. The ambitious Francis I took the French crown, while the Austrian King Charles V was elected Holy Roman Emperor (adding Spain and a huge portion of Italy to his kingdom). Wolsey, aware of the financial sinkhole that the wars had been, worked hard to keep the peace. He managed to put quills to paper with the Treaty of London in 1518, while friendship would be forged at the Field of the Cloth of Gold on 7 June 1520. The plan was that Henry and Francis would spend a week enjoying the festivities and settling their differences, while Wolsey met with Charles V. It did not go according to plan.

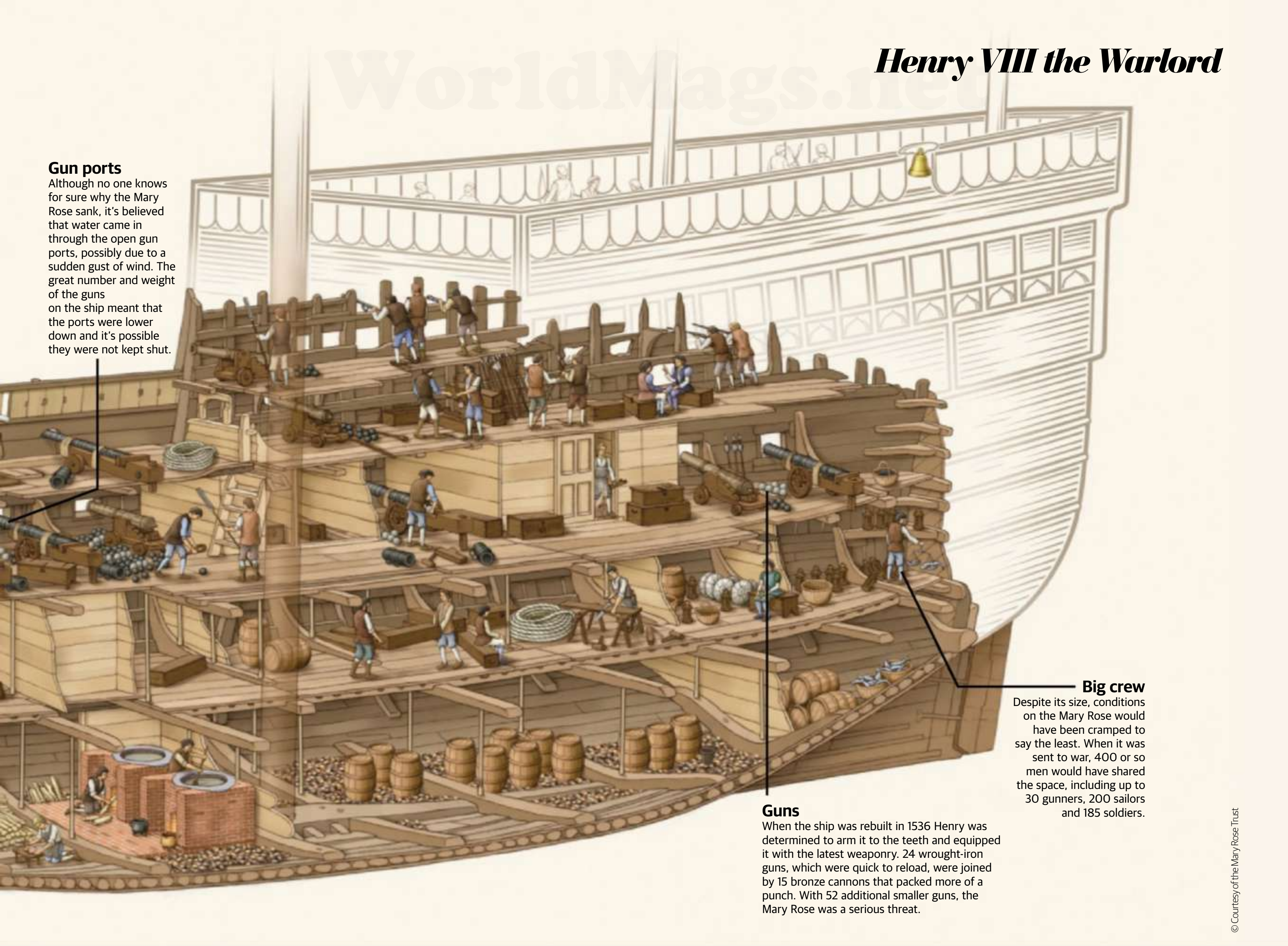
For all Wolsey's good intentions, this attempt at friendship was doomed from the start. Henry had never wanted peace to start with,

THOMAS MORE

English, 1478-1535

Brief Bio

Thomas More trained as a lawyer and nearly became a monk before entering Henry's employ in 1517, taking on a variety of roles from interpreter to writer and chief diplomat. The two quickly became close confidants and More was knighted four years later, before becoming the speaker of the House of Commons in 1523. It was his strong Catholic faith that would prove his downfall. Although he was made lord chancellor in 1529, he rejected the formation of the Church of England with Henry at its head, so resigned soon after. His refusal to accept the new denomination would lead to his arrest and eventual execution on 6 July 1535.



Gun ports
Although no one knows for sure why the Mary Rose sank, it's believed that water came in through the open gun ports, possibly due to a sudden gust of wind. The great number and weight of the guns on the ship meant that the ports were lower down and it's possible they were not kept shut.

Big crew
Despite its size, conditions on the Mary Rose would have been cramped to say the least. When it was sent to war, 400 or so men would have shared the space, including up to 30 gunners, 200 sailors and 185 soldiers.

Guns
When the ship was rebuilt in 1536 Henry was determined to arm it to the teeth and equipped it with the latest weaponry. 24 wrought-iron guns, which were quick to reload, were joined by 15 bronze cannons that packed more of a punch. With 52 additional smaller guns, the Mary Rose was a serious threat.

© Courtesy of the Mary Rose Trust

and Francis had no intention of bowing down to his English counterpart. Ambitious, stubborn and proud, the two men were too similar for any attempts at friendship to work. After the first meeting was concluded, the two kings engaged in a week of oneupmanship and competition. It was a week dedicated to flaunting power and status; the 'cloth of gold' referred to the ludicrously lavish tents. Henry was determined to prove his athleticism and joined the competitions, but Francis had a similar idea. Henry had to suffer the humiliation of losing to the French king in a wrestling match, and it is hardly surprising that the only result of the meeting was a greater sense of hatred. Instead, Henry turned his diplomatic attentions to Charles V.

Henry's alliance with the Habsburgs had continued throughout the years of peace, despite one or two hiccups involving marriage arrangements. Crucially, Charles and Henry shared a mutual loathing of Martin Luther and King Francis. His hatred of the French king meant that war was inevitable and Henry eagerly awaited the perfect opportunity to mount another attack. When hostilities resumed in 1521, Henry declared that England was now allied with the Holy Roman Emperor and signed the Treaty of Windsor in 1522 to make 'The Great Enterprise' official. At this point in his plans, Henry could not afford a full-scale invasion and an attack on Picardy failed due to a lack of communication and, perhaps more importantly, trust.

> "Henry's ambition to conquer France was hamstrung by the fact that he couldn't afford it"

Henry's ambition to conquer France and claim the throne for himself was hamstrung by the fact that he couldn't afford it. He had previously helped to bankroll Ferdinand and Maximilian and he had seen them make peace without him. Henry was scared that Charles might repeat his father's trick and, for his part, Charles had no particular interest in seeing Henry on the French throne. Their mutual distrust would only grow.

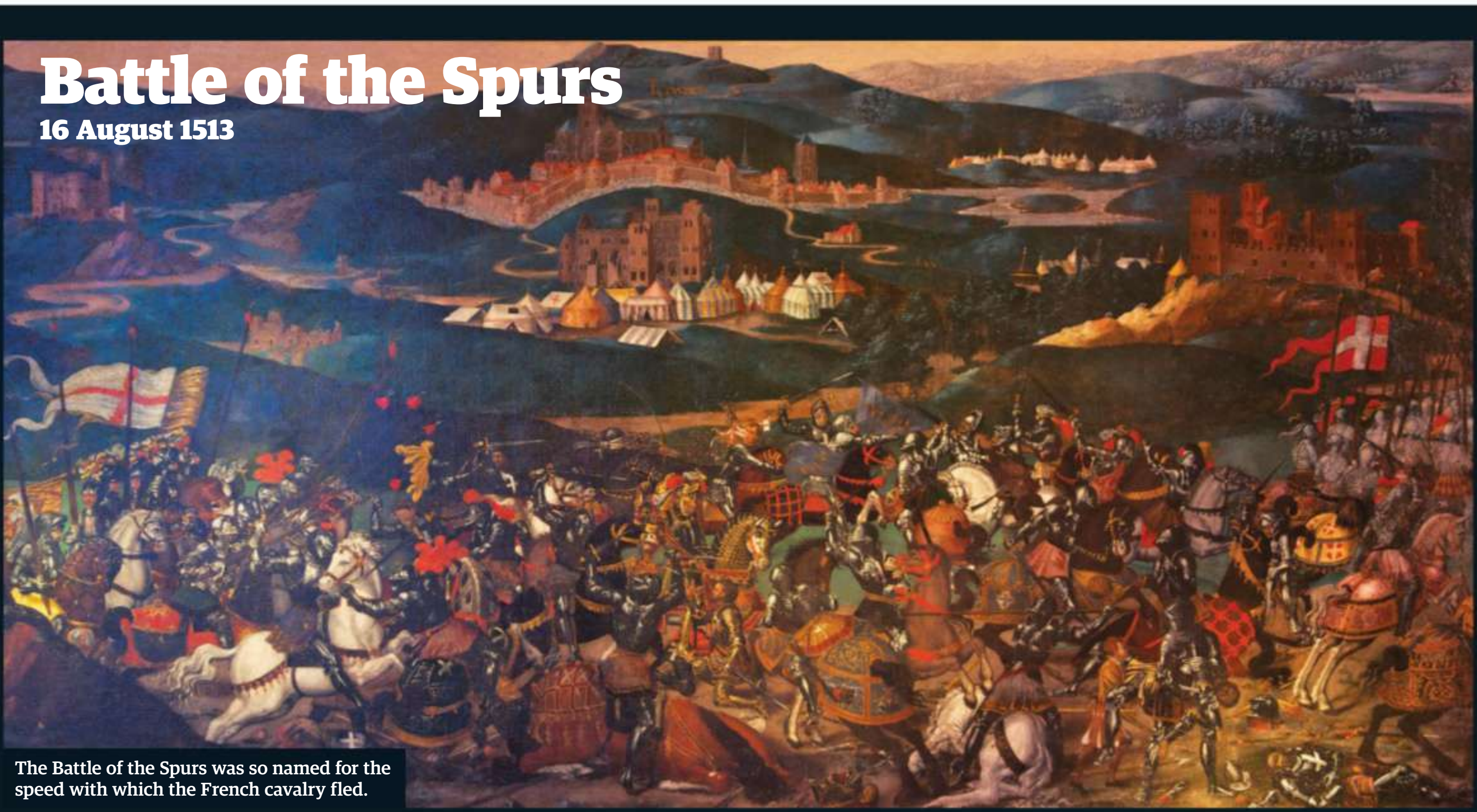
Trust wasn't the only problem. In an echo of 1513, Henry was distracted by the constant threat from the north. Whenever he began a campaign in France, the Scottish forces would threaten attack, forcing him to wage a war on two fronts. Henry was enraged and infuriated but he would not give up. He mounted another attack in 1523 to support the rebelling Duke of Bourbon, but Charles sent no help and the English troops were forced to retreat.

The line was finally crossed when Charles captured Francis at the Battle of Pavia in 1525 and showed no interest in sharing his spoils with the English king. Henry decided that the time had come for a full-scale invasion. With nowhere near enough money, Henry and Cardinal Wolsey tried to create the 'Amicable Grant' tax to pay for the attack, but opposition proved so fierce that Henry was forced to scrap his plans and publicly blame Wolsey. The humiliation of backpedalling helped Henry to realise that he was not going to get what he wanted. He signed the Treaty of the More with Francis's mother, Louise of Savoy, and turned his attention towards his family.

Not surprisingly, Charles's rejection rankled Henry. The Holy Roman Emperor's increased presence in Italy once again caused the panicking Pope Clement VII to create the League of Cognac,

Battle of the Spurs

16 August 1513



The Battle of the Spurs was so named for the speed with which the French cavalry fled.

Henry and his English forces had been laying siege to the town of Thérouanne since July 1513. Following the embarrassment at Gascony, he had finally arrived in France to lead his army to great conquest. He camped close, but not too close to the city, and laid siege. A stalemate ensued until French action on 16 August tipped the scales.

The French forces had seen Maximilian's Holy Roman Army join Henry's and decided that the time had come to attempt a counterattack. On the morning of 16 August, French light cavalry, a few thousand strong, attacked the invaders' positions. However, word had reached the Holy League's camp of the planned attack and a trap had been prepared, leading to a brutal skirmish. It was an attack that was ultimately doomed to fail, with Henry and Maximilian's combined forces coming to roughly 30,000 men. The speed with which the surviving French rode away led to the name of the battle.

It was not a significant military victory in any other term than morale. Henry had been looking for a victory to claim in France, and this encounter was the first real battle of his campaign. He celebrated it but the actual gains from the Battle of the Spurs and the subsequent fall of Thérouanne would impress nothing but his ego. At great financial expense, Henry's dreams of Agincourt came a little closer.

Verdict

The victory at the Battle of the Spurs did more for Henry's ego than it did for the outcome of his campaign, essentially proving to be an incredibly expensive display.

> "Overjoyed at having the queen he lusted after, Henry realised that a Europe united against him was dangerous"

which united Venice, Florence and France against Charles. Henry was not a member, but offered to help bankroll the group. His treaty with Francis in the Treaty of Westminster on 30 April 1527 was a sign that his mind was elsewhere.

Henry was desperate to be separated from Catherine and marry Anne Boleyn. He had no interest in a divorce and instead wanted to prove that it had been illegal to marry his brother's widow. This would soothe the good Catholic in him, but it set him against Charles V, who was appalled by what the accusation said about his aunt, Catherine. However, circumstances were not in Henry's favour; Charles had attacked Rome in retaliation for the League's advances. Pope Clement VII was now his prisoner and Catherine's nephew made his influence felt. Clement gained his freedom in December, but the emperor had no interest in peace talks with the League. Once again, Charles had frustrated Henry's plans and he declared war with the Holy Roman Emperor in January. However, England lacked the finances to do any more than declare itself at war; it's unlikely that this worried Charles too much. The situation in Europe finally resolved itself in 1529 with the Treaty of Cambrai. However, Henry's determination to end his marriage had made enemies out of his old allies. Francis offered to plead his case to the new Pope Clement, but he was more concerned with cementing his own alliance with the Holy See. Anne Boleyn's pregnancy pushed Henry into taking decisive action and his marriage to Catherine was annulled by Thomas Cranmer in 1533. In the eyes of the English court, his secret marriage to Anne was now completely legal. Finally, Henry was recognised as Head of the Church and abolished the right of Appeal to Rome. England was no longer Catholic and the pope had no more influence over the king.

Although he was overjoyed at finally having the queen he lusted after, Henry realised that a Europe united against him was a dangerous prospect indeed. He tried to take advantage of the frequent arguments between Charles and Francis, but in 1538 the excommunication order for Henry was finally delivered and the pope declared that the Vatican would support anyone who deposed the English king; his death was something God would turn a blind eye to. Luckily for Henry, Charles was busy with the Ottoman Empire and, if Francis planned to attack England, he had no intention of doing so alone. Henry knew that the differences between Francis and Charles would prevent them from ever remaining allies for long. He just had to be patient. Finally, in 1542, they declared war and Henry could return to the battlefield.

By this point Henry was obese, sickly and prone to violent rages. The war gave him a sense of

The Siege of Boulogne

19 July – 18 September 1544

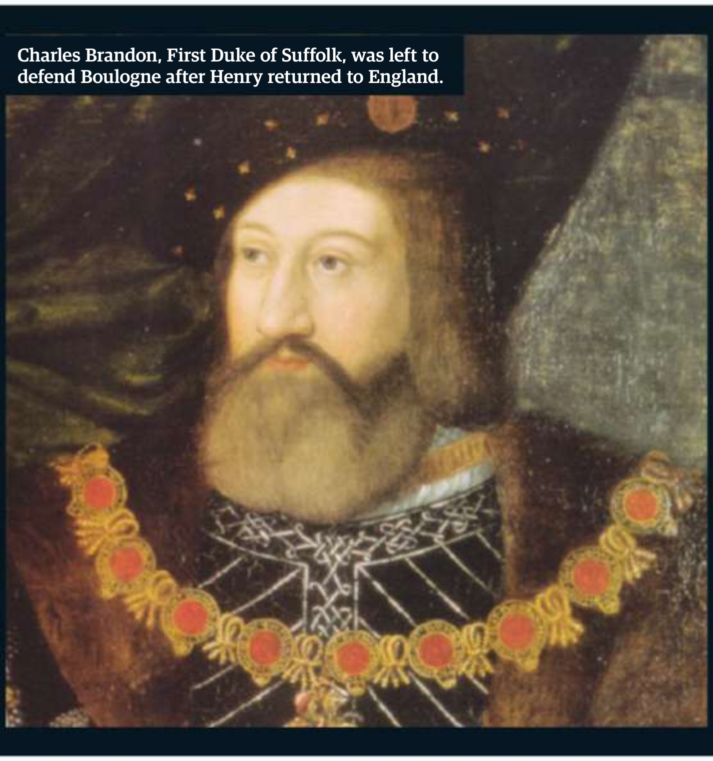
The Siege of Boulogne would be the closest thing to an unqualified victory that Henry would get in all his years of war with France. However, the conquest of a single city at tremendous expense tells us that unqualified is not really the most accurate adjective to use. Henry had been waiting for an excuse to resume hostilities with France and he eagerly joined his old ally (and old enemy) Charles V when war broke out in 1544. He raised a huge invasion force to set sail across the Channel.

The English force was split into two;=, attacking Montreuil and Boulogne, with Henry himself joining the latter. While the attack on Montreuil failed, the Siege of Boulogne, though lengthy, would result in success. The siege began on 19 July and the English forces quickly took the lower part of the city. However, they were unable to breach the castle walls and the siege stretched from weeks into months. Henry wrote to his wife (number six, Catherine Parr) praising the strength of his opponents, but it was only a matter of time before the French were forced to surrender, which they did after Henry's forces tunnelled beneath the walls.

However, Henry's triumph would be short-lived. He learned that Charles, fearful of the Ottoman threat and caring little about Henry's personal ambition, had made his own peace treaty with France without England. Henry returned home to attend to Scotland, leaving Boulogne occupied, and Francis began preparations for a counterattack.

Verdict

Henry may have taken the city, but the financial cost was enormous. Although Charles's treaty led to threats of a French invasion, Francis's attempts ultimately failed.



Charles Brandon, First Duke of Suffolk, was left to defend Boulogne after Henry returned to England.

purpose and Charles was finally back on his side. For all their past differences, now there were no personal reasons why Henry and Charles could not resume their alliance. Catherine of Aragon had passed away and, by executing Anne Boleyn, Henry had removed the insult to Charles' honour. Across the Channel, Francis wasn't sitting idly by and he knew how to keep Henry distracted.

Scotland had proved to be a continual thorn in Henry's paw during his attempts to invade France, attacking every time his attention was focused across the Channel. Having hoped that James V would be a more amenable ally than his predecessor, Henry was livid when Scotland refused to follow him in separating from Rome. When James did not appear at the diplomatic talks at York in 1541, outright conflict followed. Following a minor Scottish victory at the Battle of Haddon Rig in 1542, the two armies met at Solway Moss. In a brutal echo of Flodden Field, the Scottish army suffered a humiliating defeat. James V died of fever about two weeks later and Henry, once again buoyed by such a decisive victory, turned his attention to France.

Henry was taking no half measures and invaded France on two fronts. Stretching his finances as far as they would go, he sent troops to Montreuil under the Duke of Norfolk, while another force attacked Boulogne under the Duke of Suffolk. While Norfolk failed, Suffolk succeeded. Henry himself arrived to take charge of the siege which lasted from July until September when the city fell. He basked in the glory of a French city claimed, but his elation was short-lived. Henry was forced to turn his attention back to Scotland, where a rebellion had sprung up. His retaliation was so brutal that it became known as the 'Rough Wooing'.

The Rough Wooing

December 1543 – March 1550

The Rough Wooing was the result of Henry's failed attempt to subdue Scotland while he turned his attention to France. Although he might have won a huge victory at the Battle of Solway Moss, Henry's hopes that the Scottish would be amenable to peace proved to be ill-founded. He had given them his terms, but Henry may as well have given them a blank piece of paper, as Scotland declared its renewed allegiance to France.

At the time, Henry was planning his invasion with Charles V and could not afford to be distracted by yet another full-blown conflict with his neighbours in the north. Deciding against open battle, Henry commanded that a force should sail north and show the Scots how furious he was. It was led by Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, who was told to "Burn Edinburgh town, so razed and defaced when you have sacked and gotten what you can of it, as there may remain forever a perpetual memory of the vengeance of God."

Towns and villages were to be burned down and destroyed, and the king's strict instructions as to what to do with anyone who opposed Hertford were clear; he was commanded to continue "putting man, woman and child to fire and sword, without exception, where any resistance shall be made against you." Hertford obeyed his liege's orders with relish, sending frequent reports of his conquests back to his king, and capturing Edinburgh and the nearby port at Leith. However, France did not sit idly by, but instead sent forces to help Scottish counterattacks. This dual campaign of aggression between England and Scotland would only be (temporarily) halted by the Treaty of Camp in 1546.

Verdict

Although it had the immediate effect that Henry wanted, which was to give a show of force and wrath, the Rough Wooing only served to deeper entrench hatred and distrust of the English.

The invasion of France fell apart when Charles signed another continental peace treaty that excluded England. Francis had no intention of making peace with Henry and mounted an invasion in the summer of 1545. It was a very real threat but, fortunately for Henry, the attack was a dismal failure and Francis was forced to retreat. The Treaty of Camp brought an end to the years of war in Henry's reign, as England, France, Scotland and the Holy Roman Empire agreed to peace in 1546.

He died a year later, sickly, angry and defeated. So what does Henry VIII's history as a military commander show us? It shows him to be a man unable or unwilling to grow out of the romantic, heroic dreams of his youth. He was constantly fighting for the glory that he saw for himself and for England. In his mind, France was English property that no one before him had been able to claim. He saw himself as the king who would bring it under English rule, and it was a childhood dream that became an adult delusion. By joining with allies who had no interest in his dream, and reacting rashly to insults, real and imagined, Henry spent many years at war with little to show for it.

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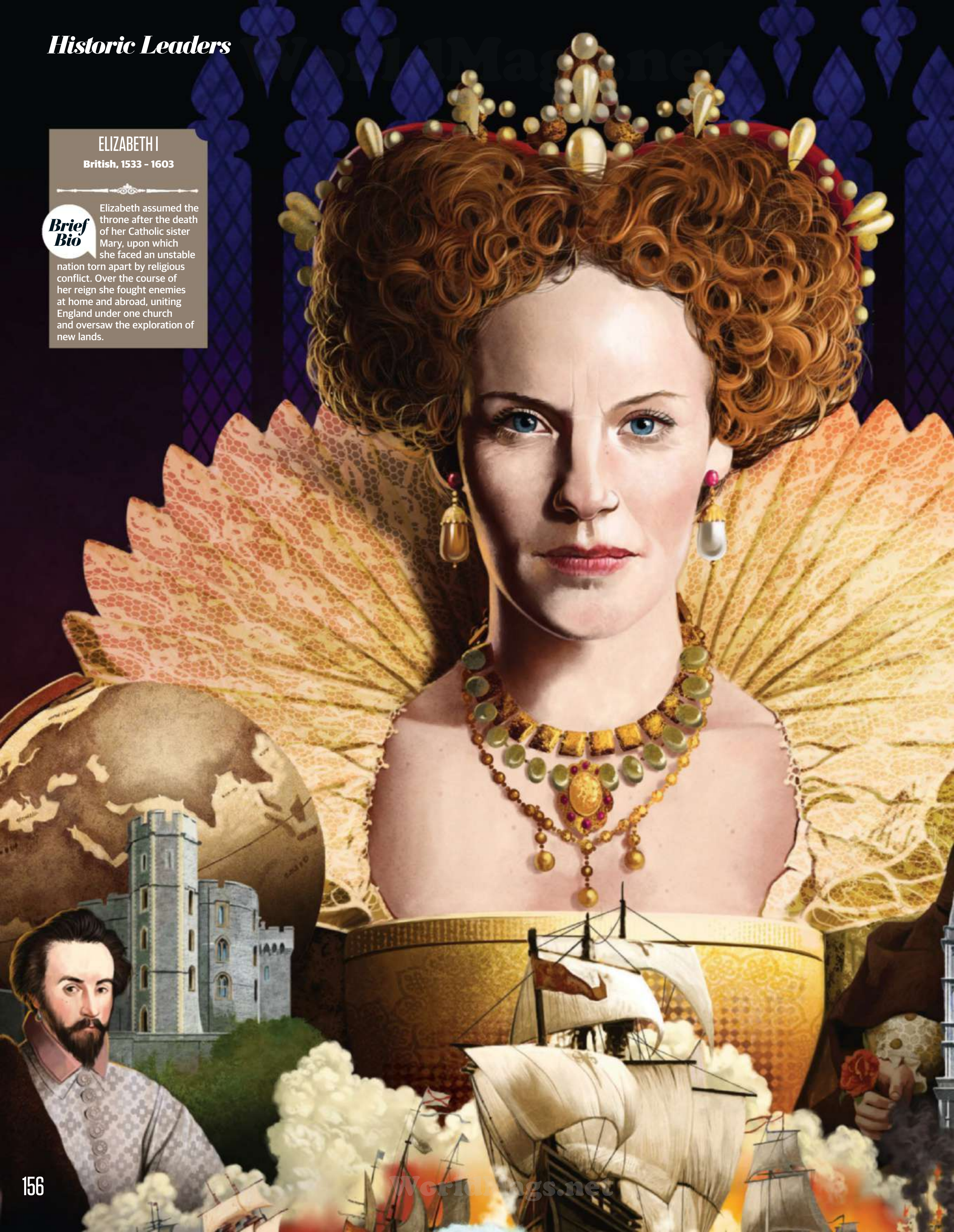
ELIZABETH I

British, 1533 – 1603

Brief Bio

Elizabeth assumed the throne after the death of her Catholic sister Mary, upon which she faced an unstable nation torn apart by religious conflict. Over the course of her reign she fought enemies at home and abroad, uniting England under one church and oversaw the exploration of new lands.



The Turbulent Reign of Elizabeth I

She fought off foreign invasions and domestic rebellions but did she really preside over a golden age?

In 1588, against the advice of her most trusted aides, Elizabeth I rode out on her grey gelding to address her troops gathered at Tilbury in Essex in preparation of repelling the expected invasion force of the Spanish Armada. Looking out at the assembled faces before her, she delivered a speech that would go down in history and for many would forever define her: "I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king - and of a king of England too."

The speech would have to be transcribed and redistributed for the soldiers who were unable to hear the queen but they had all seen their monarch, armoured and on her steed, ready to stand by them to repel the Catholic invasion. This image of Elizabeth has been the key to our popular perception of her for centuries, but there's much more to her. Elizabeth was cunning and capricious, but she could be blinded by affection, if only temporarily. She was tremendously clever, with an almost unfailing sense of what her people wanted or needed from her, but had to see off foreign invasion attempts and homegrown rebellions. While she was sitting on the throne of England the country became acquainted with some of its greatest triumphs and darkest hours.

When Elizabeth came to the throne in November 1558, the whole of Europe was on tenterhooks. How would the new Protestant queen follow the reign of her Catholic sister Mary? With an unstable nation and conspiracies at home and abroad, the situation required diplomacy, intelligence and bravery; three qualities which Elizabeth had always had in ample supply. In fact, the unstable situation was nothing new to her; Elizabeth's position had been precarious from the moment she was born. The daughter of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, she was immediately deemed as illegitimate by any Catholic nations, who regarded the king's divorce of Catherine of Aragon as illegal. In their eyes, Catherine's daughter Mary was the only rightful heir to the throne.

Although both parents had been desperate for a boy, Anne would be a doting mother to her infant child, but she was sent to the executioner's block in 1536 after failing to produce a male heir for her king. Although Henry's third wife Jane Seymour was kind to Elizabeth and Mary, she had her own child to attend to with the birth of her son and Henry's heir, Edward. Henry himself would not see much of Elizabeth until 1542, when he decided the time had come to reacquaint himself with his young daughter. He found her to be intelligent and charming, and decided that he would reinstate both Mary and Elizabeth back into his lineage.

In 1543, Henry married Catherine Parr, his last wife, and relations within the royal family warmed, as Mary took a maternal interest in young Edward, while Elizabeth enjoyed a sisterly relationship with both. However, when Edward took the throne upon their father's death, cracks started to form. First, Elizabeth had to contend with the amorous attentions of Catherine's new husband Thomas Seymour, which caused a scandal at court in 1548. Seymour's intentions were seen as treasonous, and Elizabeth was reported to be pregnant. The young princess denied these rumours, confounding her interrogator. "She hath a very good wit and nothing is gotten of her but by great policy," he wrote. This

> "She was tremendously clever, with an almost unfailing sense of what her people wanted, or needed from her"

How good was Elizabeth at balancing the books?

While the popular image is that Mary left England in a sorry state, Leanda de Lisle explains that Elizabeth's fiscal behaviour was far from immaculate. Mary left England £227,000 in debt, while her sister produced debts of £350,000. "Mary's reign was not a 'disaster'. The popular image of Mary – always 'Bloody Mary', rarely Mary I – has been greatly influenced by a combination of sexual and religious prejudice," explains De Lisle. "Mary I had named Elizabeth as her heir, despite her personal feelings towards her sister, and so allowed the crown to be inherited peacefully. Elizabeth continued to refuse to name anyone. In 1562, believing she was dying, she asked for Robert Dudley to be made Lord Protector with an income of £20,000." Elizabeth was notoriously reluctant to engage in warfare because of its costs and risk, but the Spanish conflict dragged on for years, while she awarded monopolies to her favourites at court and crops failed. "While we remember Elizabeth's success in repelling the Armada in 1588," says De Lisle, "We forget that the war continued and impoverished the country and the crown, a situation made worse by the corruption of court officials including notorious high-ranking figures such as Robert Cecil. People starved in the 1590s and the elite even began to fear possible revolution."

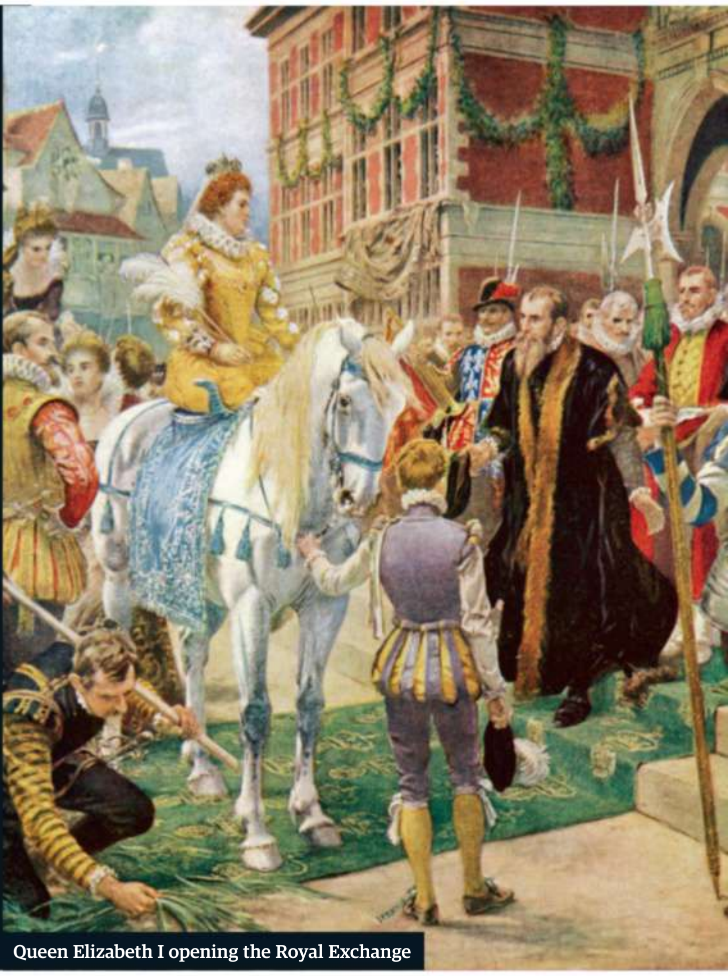
Verdict

Elizabeth was forced to deal with circumstances beyond her control, such as poor harvests and an ongoing conflict with Spain, but the fact is that she was not the financial marvel many believe her to be.

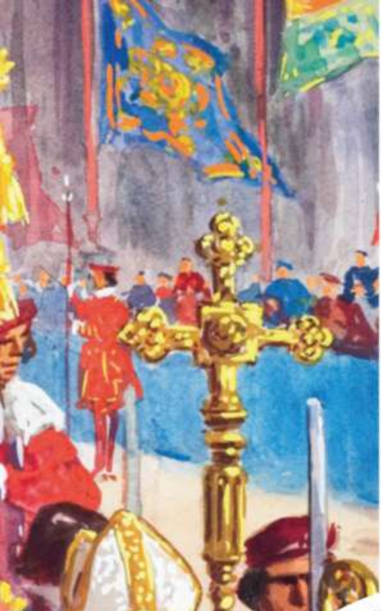
Borrowing money in the 16th century

Before the English merchant Thomas Gresham came to prominence, the Tudors had borrowed money from the great European banks such as the Antwerp Exchange. However, these banks charged a high interest rate and it was generally acknowledged that going around Europe borrowing money did nothing to improve England's image as a serious power. Money could also be borrowed from independent merchants, such as Horatio Palavicino, from whom Elizabeth was forced to borrow money late in her reign. Gresham had previously helped Edward VI rid himself of most of his debts and founded the Royal Exchange in 1571 to challenge the power of Antwerp.

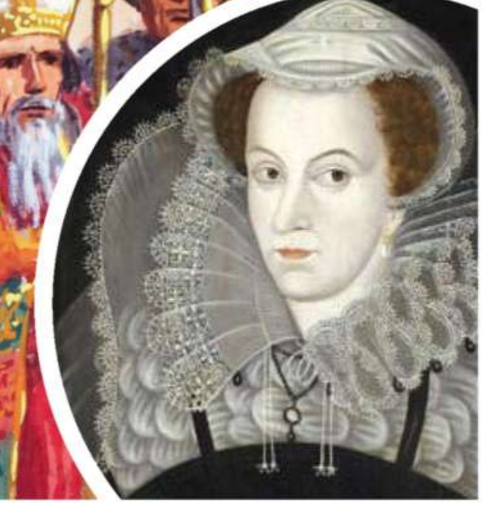
Now that Elizabeth could seek loans from within her realm, she was able to exert greater pressure to get what she wanted, while Parliament could grant her more funds if they chose. Royal revenues were supposed to cover the basic expenses of governance, while Parliament could add to the war chest. Later in her reign, she began to use increasingly severe taxation, which contributed to her decreasing popularity.



Queen Elizabeth I opening the Royal Exchange



Picture depicting the coronation of Elizabeth I in 1558



Portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was executed after being found guilty of plotting against Elizabeth I

Was a religious compromise met?

The Church of England was one of compromise and middle ground. While Elizabeth was a Protestant, she didn't hold the puritanical beliefs of some of her council members. She introduced the Act of Supremacy in 1558, which reaffirmed England's separation from Rome and established her as the head of the Church. Elizabeth understood the dangers of trying to impose religion and allowed Catholicism to continue, provided it took place in secret.

However, Leanda de Lisle reminds us that we should not forget Elizabeth's willingness to crack down when necessary. "Elizabeth's conservatism and pragmatism has seen her described as a religious moderate, in contrast to the 'fanatical' Mary," she explains. "But as the new Protestant Queen of a largely Catholic country Elizabeth was necessarily moderate, and as her reign grew longer, she proved that, like Mary, she could be utterly ruthless when faced by a threat. The hundreds of executions of villagers following the Northern Rebellion far exceeded anything her predecessors had done in similar circumstances; her later persecution of Catholics was also relentless and cruel. It is a little-known fact that she also burned heretics – namely Anabaptists – these were far fewer in number than Mary's victims, but then there weren't that many Anabaptists!" She executed both Protestants and Catholics for publicly disobeying the laws of the Church of England. However, events in Europe show the English Queen in a much more favourable light. Comparatively, Elizabeth was extremely tolerant. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris showed the fervour with which Catholic Europeans detested Protestants. She was also much more tolerant than many of her advisors.

Verdict

Elizabeth successfully found a moderate middle ground in a very turbulent time during her reign, but would crack down mercilessly if the rules she had laid down were broken.

Catholic	C of E
1 The services were held in Latin, countermanding the reformation's ideal that everyone should be able to understand. The English prayer book was banned.	1 The image of the minister became much simpler. They were not allowed to wear Roman Catholic vestments, such as the surplice.
2 Church furnishings were restored to their former lavish state and the buildings were now decorated completely with Catholic artwork.	2 All rood lofts, a screen portraying the crucifixion, a common feature in Catholic churches, were removed. The Pope was not the head of the church.
3 Catholic Mass was reintroduced, and Holy Communion was now banned by law.	3 The Bishop's Bible, which was in English rather than Latin, was restored, opening it up to a wider readership.
4 The clergy were not allowed to marry. Priests who had married before the new law came into effect were given a choice of two options: leave their families or lose their job.	4 There was a general removal of 'superstition', such as making the sign of the cross during communion. Simplicity was what the Puritans strived for.

practice would serve her well once Mary took the throne but not all players were as skilled in the game of thrones; Seymour was executed the following year.

When the staunchly Catholic Mary refused to convert, Edward began proceedings to remove both his sisters from the line to the throne, fixing his hopes on his cousin, Lady Jane Grey, instead. However, the prince was seldom in good health during his short life, so it was no surprise that he died before the contract could be finalised and Mary became the new Queen of England. Just as Edward had asked Mary to change her faith, the new queen was determined that her sister should convert. She acquiesced without enthusiasm, but it was clear to both Protestants and Catholics that her true allegiance still lay with her father's Church of England rather than the Pope's Catholic Church. Over the course of Mary's reign, many conspiracy plots were designed to get Elizabeth onto the throne. None of them succeeded, but they did almost manage to get her killed.

In 1554, Thomas Wyatt attempted a rebellion following the announcement that Mary would marry the Spanish king Philip. The queen's reprisal was brutal and swift, executing not only the ringleaders, but Jane Grey as well. Elizabeth claimed ignorance, a trick she managed to successfully repeat a year later after another attempted rebellion in 1555, but her sister's patience was wearing thin and Elizabeth was placed in the Tower of London, with some Catholic supporters clamouring for her execution.

> "The queen's reprisal was brutal and swift, executing not only the ringleaders, but also Jane Grey"

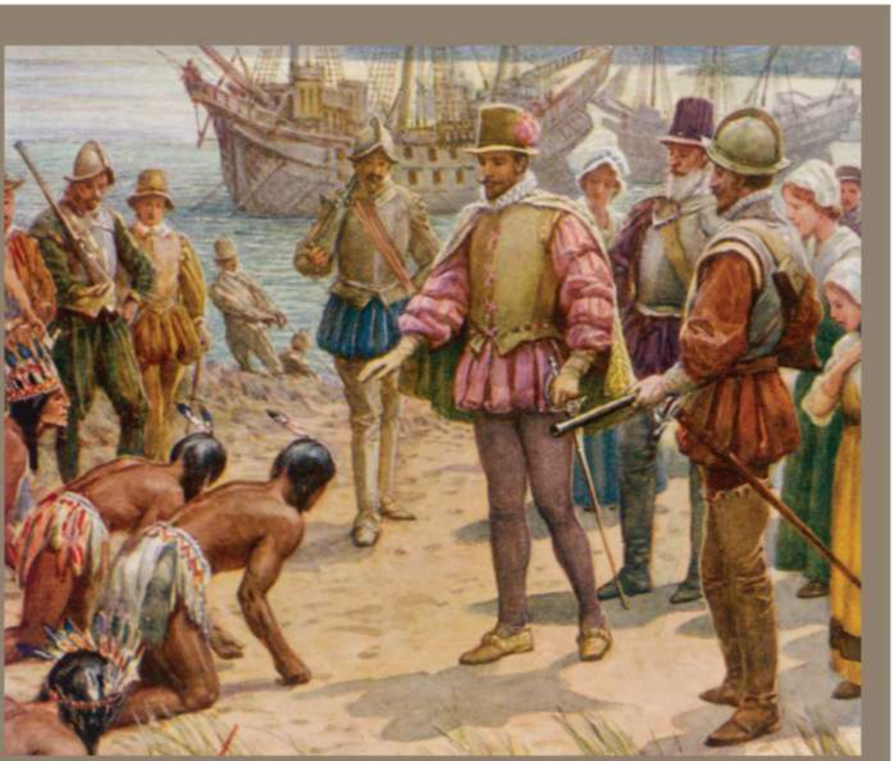
Elizabeth's future prospects were looking anything but golden, and the next few months saw her walking a political tightrope. Mary, desperate to provide her husband and her country with a Catholic heir to end the uncertainty surrounding the throne, announced that she was pregnant, but by 1558, it became clear that Mary's condition was not pregnancy, but a devastating illness. Her health broke quickly, and she died on 17 November of that year after begging Elizabeth to keep England Catholic once she took the throne. Her wishes would not be fulfilled.

Elizabeth's coronation was a stunning balancing act. With countless eyes waiting for any hint of an overtly Protestant or Catholic gestures, Elizabeth managed to confound them all. Instead, the emphasis was elsewhere: Elizabeth's intention to restore England to a state of prosperity. The new queen knew that if she was to have any chance of surviving her early years she would need trusted and astute advisors, and chose William Cecil and Robert Dudley. Cecil had worked for Edward, survived the reign of Mary and was fiercely loyal to Elizabeth. In contrast, Dudley's appointment and favour with the queen had nothing to do with his abilities as a politician. He had known Elizabeth since childhood and her affection for him had only grown stronger, and rumours abounded that she spent the nights as well as the days with him.

Cecil disapproved of Dudley and agreed with the majority of Parliament that Elizabeth should marry as soon as possible. The eyes of France and Spain were fixed on England and it made sense for the queen to create a marriage alliance with one of these major powers for her and the country's safety. King Philip II made no secret of his desire to marry Elizabeth, but she had no interest in marrying Mary's former husband. Henry of Anjou was suggested as a match, but he was still a child. Elizabeth spoke instead of being married to her nation, but scandal struck when Dudley's wife Amy died suddenly after apparently falling down the stairs in 1560. It was rumoured that Dudley had committed the deed for his queen, and Elizabeth was forced to expel him from her court.

In 1561, Elizabeth's cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, returned to Scotland from France. For many Catholics, Mary was the true successor and she did little to downplay those clamouring for a Catholic monarch. Her arrival was perfectly timed, as Elizabeth was on the verge of death due to smallpox. However, she recovered and, with the scandal over Dudley dissipating, Elizabeth chose him to be Lord Protector, bringing him back into her court, before shocking everyone by suggesting a marriage between him and Mary. This was Elizabeth showing her political astuteness; she knew well that Scotland with a Catholic heir would

> "The Queen rallied troops by declaring that she would fight by their side to repel anyone who dare set foot on their land"



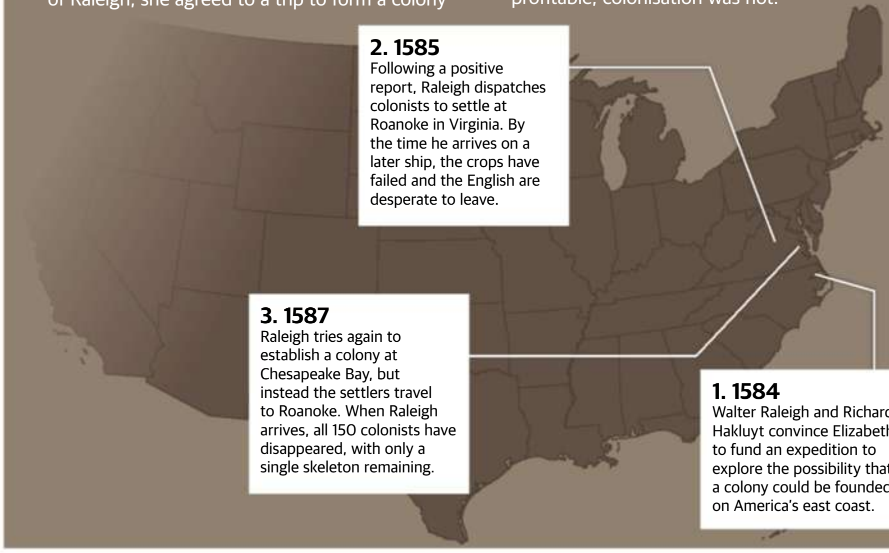
Did Elizabeth have a genuine thirst for new worlds?

Although the expansion of trade into India occurred during Elizabeth's reign, in terms of exploration she is best remembered for England's attempt to colonise North America. The Spanish and Portuguese had already laid claim to much of South America, establishing lucrative trade routes, but North America was relatively unexplored. Elizabeth was reluctant to fund exploratory voyages for much the same reasons that she was reluctant to fund wars: they were expensive and risky. However, she could be won around with the promise of riches from one of her favourites and, when sailor Davy Ingram returned to England with alluring tales of riches and simple inhabitants, geographer Richard Hakluyt began plotting a serious expedition to be led by Walter Raleigh.

With the promise of fortune and the flattery of Raleigh, she agreed to a trip to form a colony named after her: Virginia. The first party launched, and Raleigh would follow. When the nobleman arrived, he saw the settlement had failed. The English were desperate to leave. Raleigh's second attempt was intended for Chesapeake Bay, but the first group, led by John White, returned to Roanoke. Raleigh arrived with his second group and found no trace of survivors. Elizabeth was disappointed that these costly ventures yielded no results. There was one purpose to these expeditions, as de Lisle explains very simply: "Making money."

Verdict

The Elizabethan era's reputation for exploration is largely due to the fact that there was money to be made from it. Piratical ventures were profitable; colonisation was not.



2. 1585
Following a positive report, Raleigh dispatches colonists to settle at Roanoke in Virginia. By the time he arrives on a later ship, the crops have failed and the English are desperate to leave.

3. 1587
Raleigh tries again to establish a colony at Chesapeake Bay, but instead the settlers travel to Roanoke. When Raleigh arrives, all 150 colonists have disappeared, with only a single skeleton remaining.

1. 1584
Walter Raleigh and Richard Hakluyt convince Elizabeth to fund an expedition to explore the possibility that a colony could be founded on America's east coast.

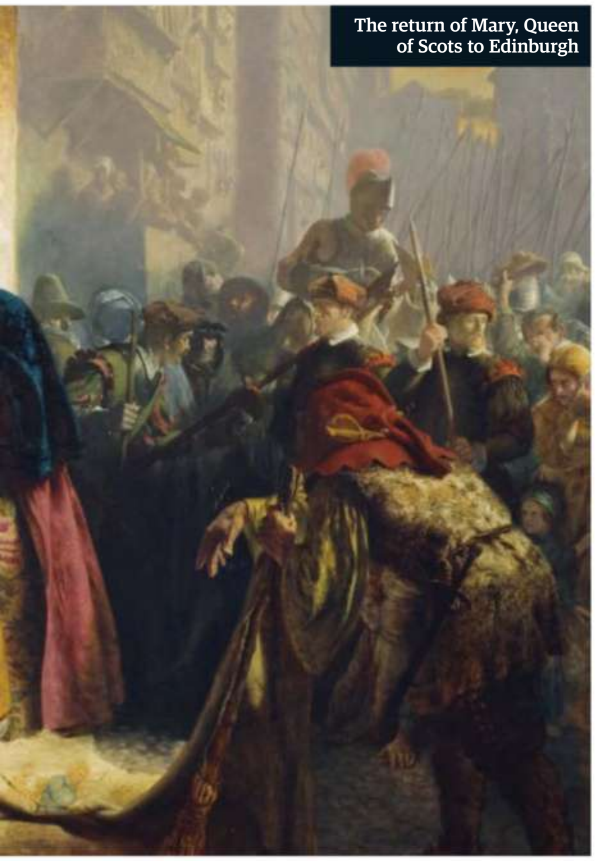
have too much power, but an heir produced by her favourite and Mary, Queen of Scots could potentially unite the two countries. However, Dudley refused and Mary had no interest in marrying her cousin's paramour.

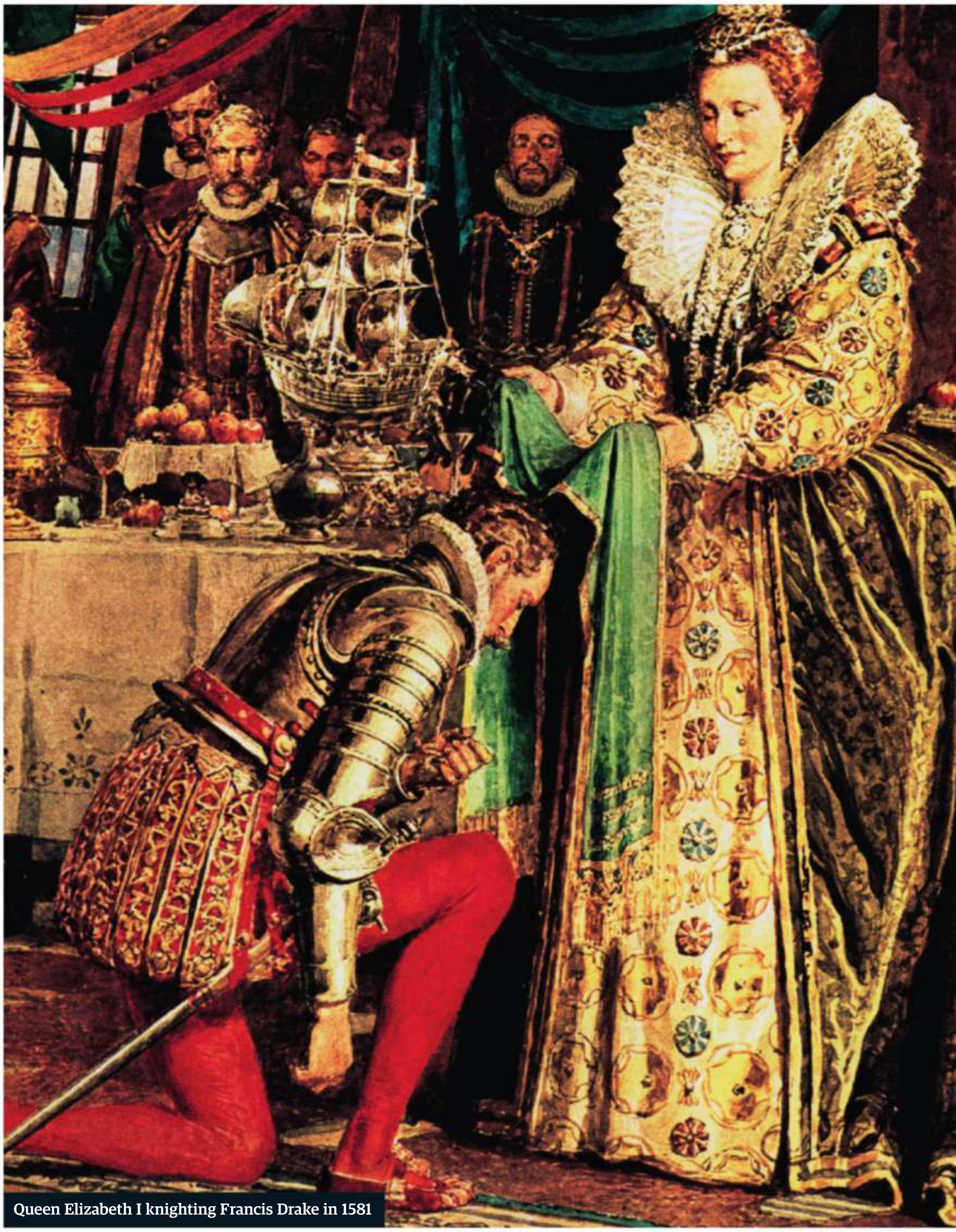
Instead, Mary married for love, choosing Lord Henry Darnley. Seeing this may have prompted Elizabeth to renew her interest in Dudley, which greatly upset the council, in particular the ambitious Lord Norfolk. When the tension between Norfolk and Dudley grew too great, Elizabeth understood that she needed to assert her authority. "I will have here but one mistress and no master," she told Dudley. It was both a political statement and a personal one. The lack of a husband and heir was only made worse in 1566 when Mary gave birth to a son, James, but she was desperately unhappy. Darnley was a violent, drunken husband: many believed he brutally murdered her secret lover, David Rizzio. Darnley would meet his own nasty end a year later, when he was found strangled in the garden of a house. Mary quickly married the Earl of Bothwell, the man who had allegedly murdered Darnley, and Scottish forces rose against her. Imprisoned and forced to abdicate, she eventually fled to England. Elizabeth agreed to give Mary shelter, but her arrival in the north had given Catholics a figurehead and rebellion brewed.

The northern Earls suggested that Norfolk should marry Mary: soon, the Northern Rebellion had begun. As the rebel forces marched south, Elizabeth moved Mary to Coventry and mustered troops of her own. The southern Earls rallied to her cause, which stunned the rebel forces, who began to retreat. Elizabeth's victory was quick and decisive, with 700 men being executed in a brutal display of power. Norfolk was placed under arrest, but a lack of concrete evidence postponed his execution, until he was implicated in the Ridolfi plot, which aimed to make Spain's Philip II king. Elizabeth ordered and rescinded Norfolk's execution three times - a prime example of how indecisive she could be at times - before finally deciding that he simply had to die.

If Elizabeth's position at home appeared shaky it was positively stable compared to how she was viewed abroad. The Pope decreed that anyone who murdered the heretical English queen would be forgiven, a statement King Philip took to heart. Not wanting to risk open war, Elizabeth found other ways to aggravate her enemies. She quietly patronised the piratical exploits of John Hawkins and later his cousin Francis Drake. In 1577, when he planned to travel to South America to raid Spanish gold, Elizabeth met Drake with Francis Walsingham, one of her ambassadors to France.

The cautious Cecil had to be kept in the dark, but she told Drake explicitly that she supported him: "I would gladly be revenged on the King of Spain for diverse injuries I have received." Having sailed through the Straits of Magellan and captured a Spanish ship carrying up to £200,000 in gold,


The return of Mary, Queen of Scots to Edinburgh


Queen Elizabeth I knighting Francis Drake in 1581

Drake decided to sail across the Pacific, becoming the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe. Elizabeth gloried in his achievement, and when she met the Spanish ambassador in 1581, she pointedly wore a crucifix Drake had given to her from the loot. She dined with Drake on the Golden Hind and knighted him. He had done her proud.

These piratical exploits stood in sharp contrast to the events of 1572. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris – the assassination of a number of French Calvinist Protestants – shocked England and the ambassador Sir Francis Walsingham was forced to take refuge. Elizabeth brought him back to London to become her spymaster, where he advised that Mary, Queen of Scots was a real danger. The uprising was not only a shocking scene for English Protestants; it was also a sign that the Protestant Netherlands and their booming wool trade would soon be in danger.

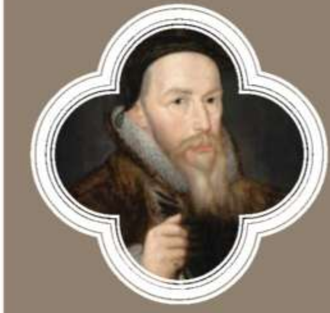
When William the Silent asked Elizabeth for military assistance, she did not want to be seen to intervene and give Philip of Spain an excuse to attack. Walsingham counselled war, while Cecil continued to preach marriage. So Elizabeth entertained the idea of marrying the Duke of Anjou, roughly ten years after it had first been suggested. Then, he had been an ugly youth and she had been a beautiful queen. Now, she was visibly older and the flattery of the French ambassador and Anjou's letters began to win her over. When they finally met, it appeared that Elizabeth really was in love, but there were genuine concerns over how the English people would react.

"The anxieties Elizabeth expressed to the emissary of Mary, Queen of Scots in 1561, that she too could not marry anyone without triggering unrest in one group or another, only deepened following Mary, Queen of Scots's disastrous marriages to Darnley and then Bothwell – which ended in her overthrow," explains Leanda de Lisle, author of Tudor: The Family Story. "Elizabeth continued to look publicly for a husband to fulfil national expectations that she would provide them with an undisputed heir, and surely she hoped it was not impossible. She was married to her kingdom – a phrase she had learned from Mary Tudor. But while Mary had married, Elizabeth did not because she feared revolt by those who disapproved of her choice."

Although she clearly wanted to marry the man that she had nicknamed her "frog," the English people found the idea of their Virgin Queen marrying a French Catholic absolutely repulsive. When a pamphlet appeared that condemned the union, Elizabeth decreed that both the author and his printer should have their right hands cut off. Her Privy Council was split in half, with the jealous Robert Dudley vehemently opposed. Elizabeth was heartbroken, but she agreed to abstain. She gave Anjou £10,000 to continue his war against Philip in the Netherlands, but did not see him again. He tried to take power for himself but failed and died a year later. When William the Silent was assassinated in his own house in 1584

Main players of

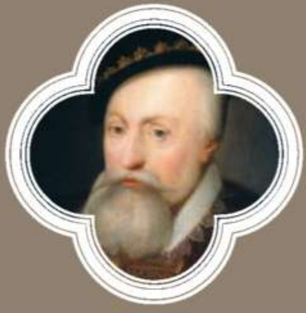
Council and Government



William Cecil

1520-98

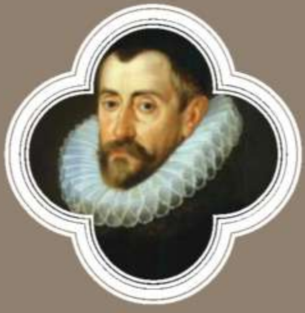
A canny political operator who understood the difficulties that were ahead, Cecil was Elizabeth's first appointment and was fiercely loyal, dedicating his life to helping her. Although he believed she should marry, Elizabeth knew Cecil was invaluable and pressured him into staying on, even when he was sickly and deaf.



Robert Dudley

1532-88

Dudley had known Elizabeth since childhood, and was her first love. His appointment to court had more to do with her affection for him than any outstanding abilities as a politician, however, and his presence at court proved to be a continual source of rumour and scandal. Their relationship was rocky and driven by passion.

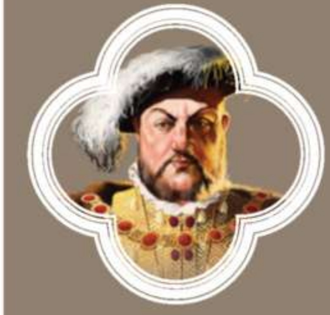


Francis Walsingham

1532-90

The Protestant Walsingham was allowed to return to England after Mary's death, and quickly became one of Elizabeth's most invaluable assets. A brilliant spymaster and politician, he understood the threat that Mary, Queen of Scots posed, and engineered her downfall. He also supported Drake and Raleigh's explorations.

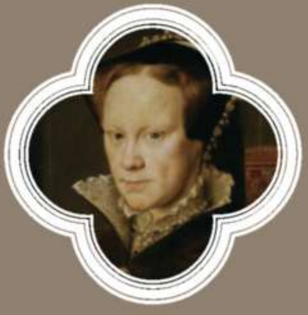
Family



Henry VIII

1491-1547

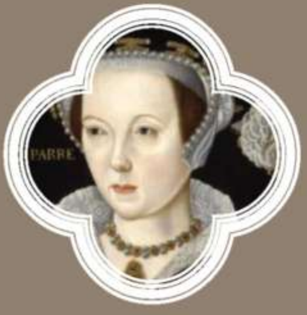
Henry was desperate for a boy to carry on his family name, and was disappointed when Anne Boleyn gave him Elizabeth. He was absent for much of her childhood, but was kept informed of her progress nonetheless. When he finally met his daughter he was very impressed, so much so that he reinstated her and Mary into his legacy.



Mary Tudor

1516-58

Despite their differences, Mary, Elizabeth and their brother Edward had a relatively close relationship as children. When she became Queen, Mary was desperate for Elizabeth to convert and unable to understand why she wouldn't. She came close to executing her sister, but abstained, finally requesting that she keep England Catholic.



Catherine Parr

1512-48

Catherine and Elizabeth became close during her marriage to Henry, and Elizabeth lived with Catherine for some time after his death. However, Catherine's husband Thomas Seymour was more interested in their young charge than his wife, and she assisted in his attempts at seduction, dying soon after they failed.

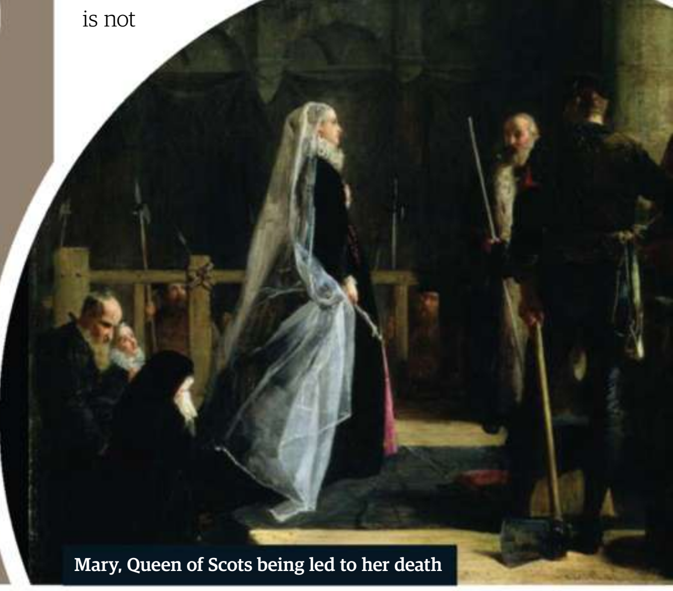
"She bitterly resented the circumstances of Mary's execution"

by a Catholic fanatic, it was clear that military intervention could not be put off any longer and so in 1585, to the relief of her impatient councillors, she agreed to send a small force of men. Dudley took command in the Netherlands but proved to be incompetent, losing territory to Philip's general, the Duke of Parma. Mary was now more dangerous than ever. Elizabeth ordered her imprisonment at the urging of Francis Walsingham, who had no intention of allowing her to live much longer. He arranged for a servant, one of his own spies, to suggest that Mary smuggle letters in beer barrels, allowing Walsingham to read everything. When Thomas Babingdon wrote to Mary with a plan to assassinate Elizabeth and give her the crown Mary wrote back with her approval; the spymaster's trap had worked perfectly, and he had ensnared his unwitting prey.

Walsingham leapt into action and ordered the conspirators' execution. Elizabeth had always been reluctant to execute her cousin, but she agreed she would have to stand trial. It was no surprise when the court decided that Mary should be put to death. Elizabeth grieved for Mary, or at least lamented her death. The man who had delivered the warrant was imprisoned and stripped of his title.

Elizabeth was always reluctant to sign a death warrant - or at least she was reluctant to be seen to sign it. We can't know how much of Elizabeth's grief was genuine, but she bitterly resented the circumstances of Mary's execution.

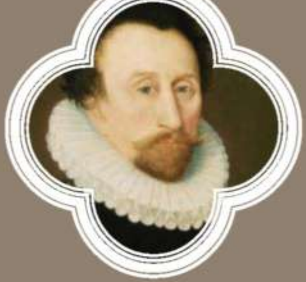
"Elizabeth was reluctant to be seen to execute first the senior nobleman in England, in Norfolk, and then a fellow queen, in Mary," says de Lisle: "That is not



Mary, Queen of Scots being led to her death

the golden age

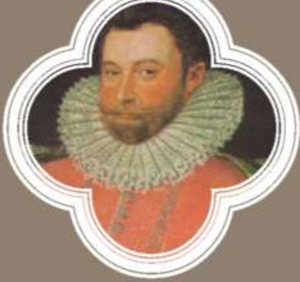
Explorers



John Hawkins

1532-95

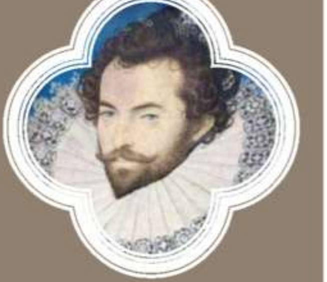
Hawkins may have possessed a coat of arms, but he first managed to find favour with the Queen as a pirate. With Elizabeth's implicit permission, he planned and executed a series of daring raids on Spanish ports in the West Indies, but after a disastrous third voyage he returned to England, where he began working for the Queen in a more direct capacity.



Francis Drake

1540-96

Having sailed on his cousin John Hawkins' expeditions, Francis Drake had no love for the Spanish. He was willing to circumnavigate the globe in order to rob them of their riches and deliver them to Elizabeth, who was delighted with his exploits, and continued to commission him to undertake raids on Spanish ports.

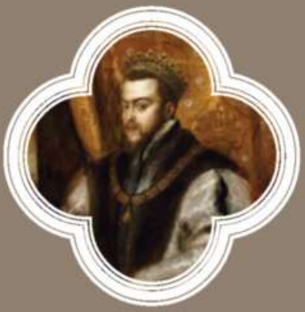


Walter Raleigh

1554-1618

Raleigh gained Elizabeth's favour at court and quickly set his sights on expanding her empire. He decided he would establish Britain's first colony in North America, and told the Queen it would be named after her: Virginia. To his great dismay, the colony at Roanoke failed. He is often falsely credited with bringing potatoes and tobacco to England.

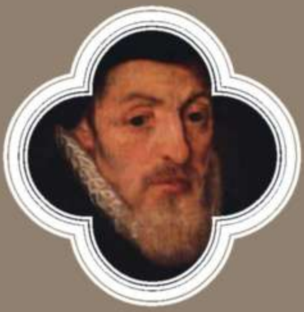
Enemies



King Philip II

1527-1598

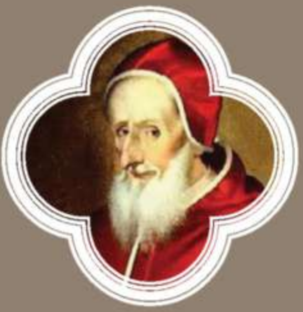
The main religious threat to Elizabeth for the majority of her realm came from the King of Spain. The Pope might have given the bull that deposed Elizabeth but the fiercely Catholic Philip was the man with the army that could enforce it. He had attempted to woo the princess while still married to her sister but, once rebuffed, relentlessly opposed her.



John Whitgift

1530-1604

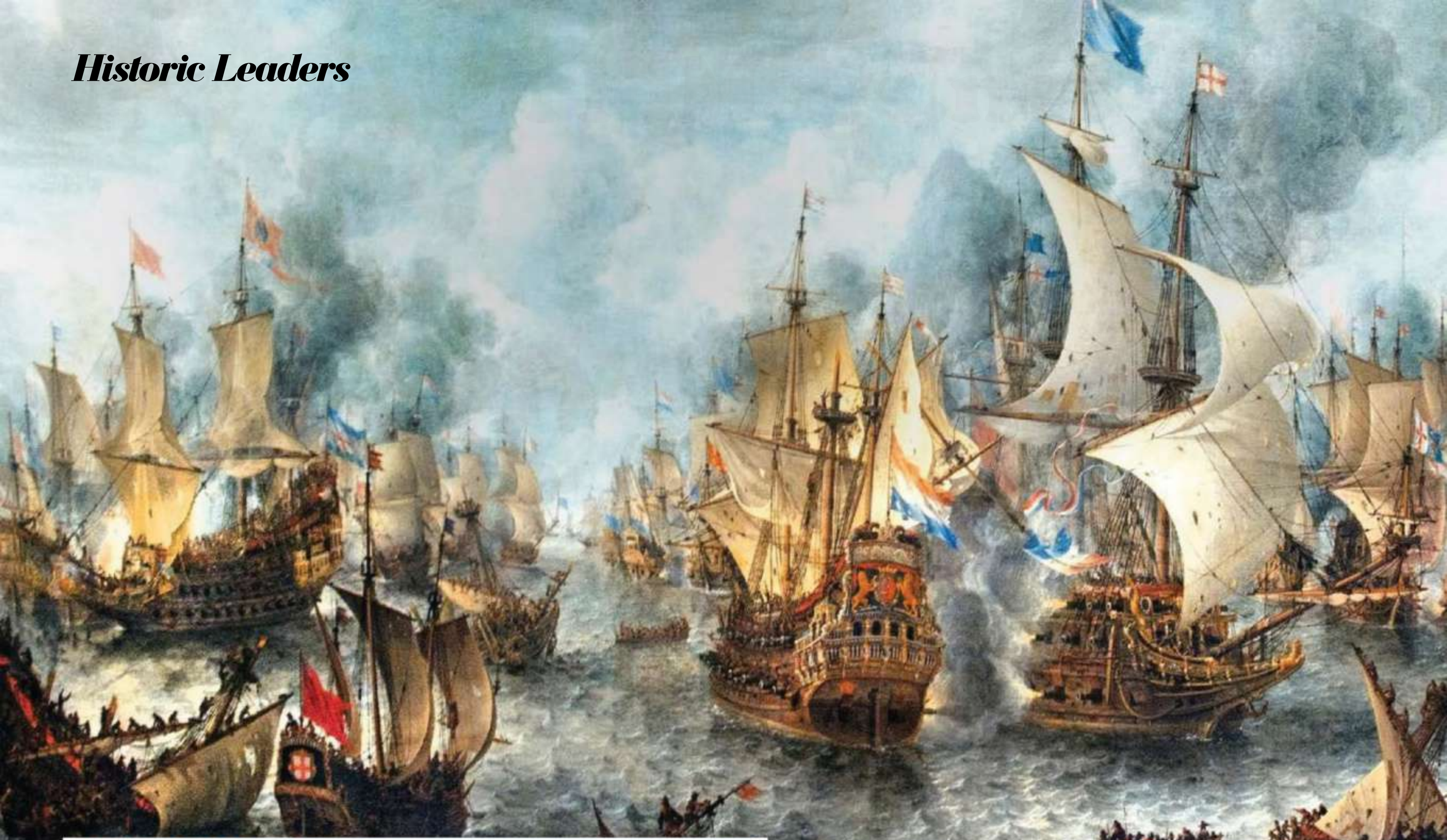
As the issue of religious tolerance became increasingly difficult to manage, Elizabeth hand-picked her old chaplain for the role of Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a stubborn man, as evidenced by his refusal to leave England during Queen Mary's reign. Like Elizabeth, he was a Conformist and ruthlessly punished those who publicly strayed from the 'right' path.



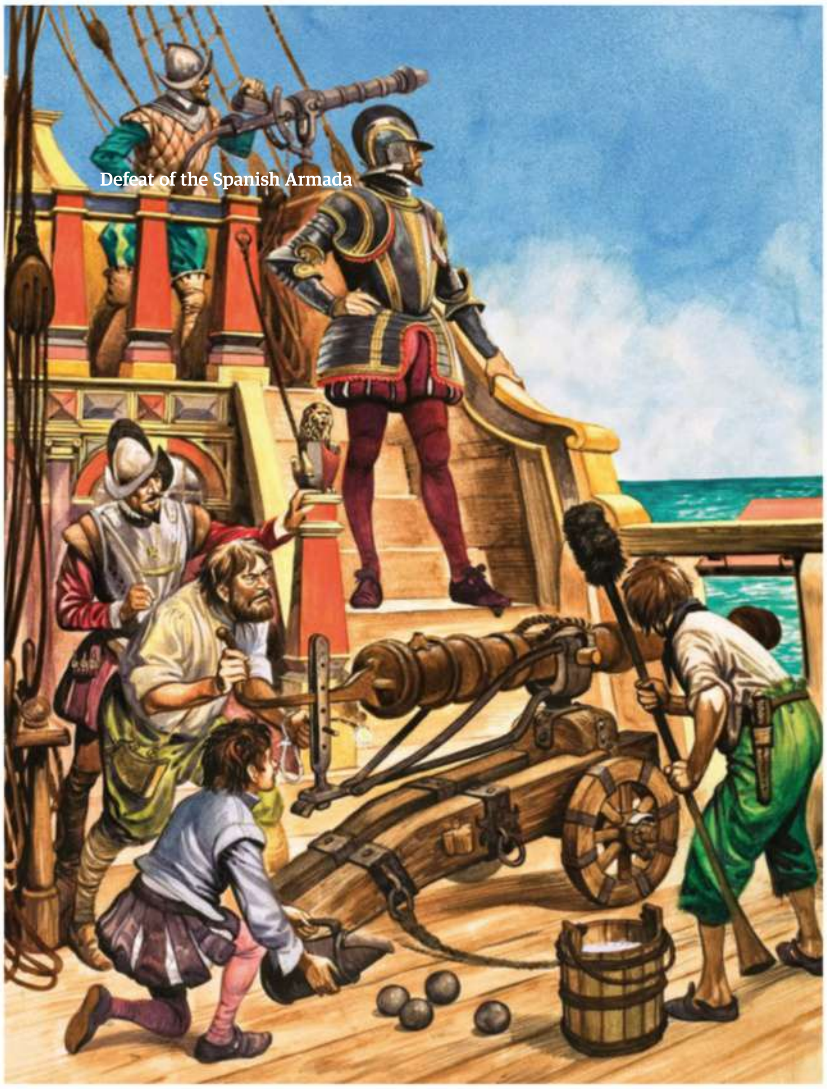
Pope Pius V

1504-72

As the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Pius V saw Elizabeth's status of Queen of England and head of its church not only as an affront to his religion, but as an act of heresy. He went as far as to issue a Papal Bull on 27 April 1570, which declared that her subjects no longer owed her any kind of allegiance.



The Spanish Armada is put into disarray by English fireships on 8 August 1588


Defeat of the Spanish Armada

The gun-crew on an Elizabethan ship - she funded the journeys of numerous privateers

to say she regretted their deaths. She would have preferred to have Mary murdered, for example, as she made very clear.

It is also notable that she was quite ruthless in ordering the deaths of traitors of humble birth - the 900 or so executed after the Northern Rebellion testifies to that. This was three times the numbers Henry VIII had executed after the far more serious Pilgrimage of Grace, and ten times the numbers Mary executed after Wyatt's revolt."

Mary's execution provided Philip II with the reason he needed to declare war and his Spanish Armada co-ordinated with the Duke of Parma's forces in the Netherlands, with the two forces meeting before sailing on England.

They launched on 12 July 1588, their forces possessing more than twice the number of English ships, but the English ships did have some advantages; they were smaller, faster, and designed to carry guns rather than men. The English ships could outmanoeuvre the Spanish fleet in open water and began to engage them in small skirmishes. It was at this point that Elizabeth rode out to meet her troops. With the threat of a Catholic force at their doorstep, the queen rallied the spirit

"The queen rallied the spirit of the English troops by declaring that she would fight by their side"

of the English troops by declaring that she would fight by their side to repel anyone who dared to set foot on their land.

This grandstanding was impressive and may have gone down in history's annals but was ultimately unnecessary. The Spanish Armada failed and Elizabeth's victory was the seal on her status. 'The Golden Age' had begun, where art and literature flowered. With England a visibly powerful state, the aristocracy began to patronise the arts with great abandon.

The famous playwrights of the age enjoyed patronage, albeit with some caveats. When Shakespeare wrote Richard II he was encouraged to remove a scene suggesting the ageing monarch should step aside. "Elizabeth did not care for plays," confirms de Lisle: "All too often they were used to lecture her on this or that."

Her crown may have been safe for now, but she received devastating blows with the deaths of two of her most trusted advisors, Dudley and Walsingham. Dudley was replaced at court by his handsome stepson, the Earl of Essex, and the young flatterer quickly became her favourite.

"Robert Dudley's death in 1588 signalled the passing of the old order, but Elizabeth still hoped she could continue ruling according to her motto, 'Semper Eadem' ('Always the same')" explains de Lisle. "As the years began to pass and her servants died she either did not replace them or find a near-equivalent to the servant she had lost." It's a sign of how much she leaned on her old guard that she continued to place her trust in William

Did England become a nation to be feared?

Elizabeth's foreign policy was decidedly more cautious than expansive. She was desperate to avoid conflict because it was expensive and the outcome always uncertain. However, she had a spirit that could easily be won over by the idea of adventure. She delighted in the expeditions of John Hawkins and Francis Drake, which could be seen to be aggravating the King of Spain without actually declaring open conflict. In 1562, she agreed to a military expedition in Calais, which was crushed by Catherine de' Medici's forces, and this failure would influence her military decisions for the rest of her reign.

"There was no glory in it for Elizabeth as there was for a male monarch," Leanda de Lisle reveals. "She understood the truth of the adage of Mary of Hungary: that war made it impossible for a woman to rule effectively, 'all she can do is shoulder responsibility for mistakes committed by others.'"

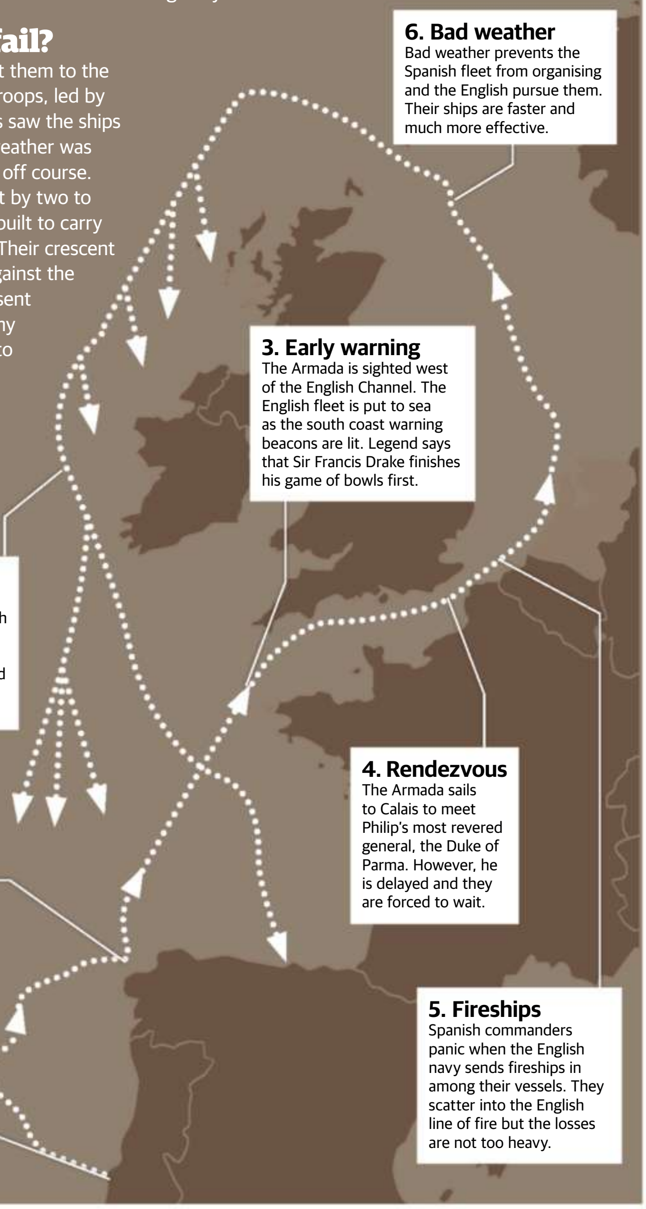
Her ally and enemy lines were drawn by religion. France and Spain were clearly opposed to England on these grounds, which is why her courtiers were so anxious that Elizabeth marry an eligible man from either country. Even after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, Elizabeth was reluctant to be drawn into open war. The piecemeal way in which she gave the Dutch her assistance shows her reluctance to engage in open conflict of any kind, first offering financial support to the Dutch troops, then the Duke of Anjou, before finally agreeing to send an English force when there was no other option. Her cautious attitude towards foreign policy doubtless saved the kingdom a lot of money. However, it was taken out of her hands when the Spanish Armada sailed on England."

Verdict

The victory against the Armada was a shining moment but for the most part Elizabeth kept out of foreign conflict. When she didn't, she regularly suffered defeats.

Why did the Armada fail?

King Philip amassed his Armada and sent them to the Netherlands to join up with his ground troops, led by the Duke of Parma. The English outposts saw the ships coming and alerted the admiralty. The weather was against the Spanish, as they were blown off course. While they outnumbered the British fleet by two to one, the Spanish ships were enormous, built to carry troops that could board enemy vessels. Their crescent formation was famous, but it did little against the smaller English ships. When the English sent fireships into the Spanish fleet, the enemy panicked and scattered. They managed to regroup for one confrontation, and lost. The Spanish retreated, with many ships crashing on the rocks of the English and Irish coastline.



1. Armada sets sail
On 28 May 1588, Philip is ready to begin his invasion of England. He gathers his Armada and they sail from Lisbon.

2. Delays
Severe weather forces Philip to dock in Coruna to make repairs to his fleet. He is delayed by more than a month.

3. Early warning
The Armada is sighted west of the English Channel. The English fleet is put to sea as the south coast warning beacons are lit. Legend says that Sir Francis Drake finishes his game of bowls first.

4. Rendezvous
The Armada sails to Calais to meet Philip's most revered general, the Duke of Parma. However, he is delayed and they are forced to wait.

5. Fireships
Spanish commanders panic when the English navy sends fireships in among their vessels. They scatter into the English line of fire but the losses are not too heavy.

6. Bad weather
Bad weather prevents the Spanish fleet from organising and the English pursue them. Their ships are faster and much more effective.

7. Ships wrecked
The weather blows the Spanish fleet into the North Sea and they are forced to retreat up England's east coast, beyond Scotland and down past Ireland. Many ships are wrecked.

Cecil, even though he was almost entirely deaf and increasingly ill. It was only when he died in 1598 that Elizabeth finally agreed to appoint Robert Cecil to his father's old post. When it became known that the Spanish were attempting to rebuild their fleet, Essex led a fleet on Cadiz and decimated their forces in port. The success gave Essex fame, something Elizabeth was taken aback by. She tried to curb him, aware that her standing among the people was her greatest asset, but Essex continued to promote his own celebrity. She became more and more frustrated with his outrageous behaviour at court, which came to a dramatic head when he half-drew his sword on her in a fit of pique.

The arts and literature may have been flourishing, but those who subscribe to this being a golden age in England's history often forget that even after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, other uprisings, such as the 1598 Irish rebellion, occurred. The country had long been a problem for Tudor England, which had attempted to impose English values and had seen the Irish as tenants on English territory. Now, with a Spanish-backed uprising, Elizabeth needed to take decisive action.

She sent her army at the start of 1599, led by Essex, who was looking to prove himself once more. He was a disaster. Rather than confronting Tyrone on the battlefield, he met him in secret and returned to England having made a treaty without the queen's authority.

When Essex thought Cecil was plotting against him, he rushed to plead his case. Assuming he was still the queen's favourite, he burst into her bedchamber while she was preparing for the day. He had seen Elizabeth without her make-up and regal dressing; not as a queen but as an old woman. She could not afford to be seen like this. The queen dismissed him before summoning him later to confront him with his failures and strip him of power. Rather than accepting his fate, Essex attempted rebellion. He assumed Londoners would back the popular war hero, but Elizabeth proclaimed him a traitor and sent her troops to meet him. The rebellion was a failure and Essex was executed as a traitor.

Although the later years of Elizabeth's reign were far from golden, she could still rally her people when needed. The war in Ireland was expensive and unsuccessful, while overcrowding and failed harvests caused agitation. When Parliament publicly condemned her for granting monopolies to her favourite courtiers, which had led to price-fixing, Elizabeth was forced to address them in 1601. She agreed to put a stop to the monopolies and she reaffirmed her love for England. She won over Parliament, there was a good harvest, and a truce was reached in Ireland and Spain. "Elizabeth, old and ill, did lose some of her former grip, but never entirely," states de Lisle. "She had followed Mary I's example in wooing the common people from the beginning of her reign, and they continued to support her."

Having seen off another uprising, the 50-year-old monarch's health was failing and after an all-too-rare period of good health, Elizabeth grew sickly. She was desperately frustrated by Cecil's growing

> "She wooed her people with smiles, words of love and great showmanship, and so won their hearts"

Did peace reign in England?

The early years of Elizabeth's reign were extremely unstable. The Catholics regarded her as a heretical bastard without a just claim to the throne, and she had to prove to her people that she was capable of ruling alone. Conspiracies at home and abroad plotted to remove her from the throne, and when Mary, Queen of Scots took refuge in England, her Catholic enemies finally had someone to rally around. 1569 saw her face the first real uprising with the Northern Rebellion. The Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland rallied the rebel aristocracy around them, but they were not prepared for the force of her reprisal.

In her later years she saw rebellion rear its head again as Essex overstepped his bounds. With famine and overcrowded of cities, Elizabeth's position became unstable once again. "Imagine if Elizabeth had died in October 1562 when she had smallpox," asks de Lisle: "Elizabeth had been on the throne almost four years: only a year short of her sister's reign. If she died, as many feared she would, how would her reign have been remembered? Elizabeth's religious settlement was not viewed as settled by anyone save the Queen. One of her own bishops called it 'a leaden mediocrity'. In military matters, while Mary I's loss of Calais is still remembered, Elizabeth's failed efforts to recover Calais by taking Le Havre and using it as a bargaining tool are completely forgotten. The campaign had ended that August 1562, with the huge loss of 2,000 men."

Verdict

Elizabeth's reign featured numerous rebellions and uprisings, but this was not unusual for a Tudor monarch, and given the religious uncertainty in the country at the time, she handled the uprisings quickly and decisively.

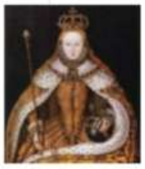
Rebellions against Elizabeth

When Elizabeth ascended to the throne she immediately faced the threat of rebellion from the Catholic nobility, who resented the fact that she was turning away from the changes made by her sister Mary. The first great uprising came in 1569, when the northern noblemen took advantage of the return of Mary, Queen of Scots to England, and attempted to overthrow her. The Duke of Norfolk, unhappy with being sidelined by the Earl of Dudley, entertained a marriage plot with Mary, while the northern Earls mounted rebellion. It was summarily crushed and hundreds were executed.

The Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's great favourite, attempted a rebellion in 1601 after he was stripped of his powers in an attempt to gain power. In line with his apparently oversized ego, he overestimated his personal popularity, the people's dissatisfaction with their monarch and his Queen's capacity for forgiveness for one of her former favourites. When Elizabeth was confronted with open defiance she rarely hesitated to crush it. She understood when to be brutal and when to charm. With the rebellions against her she was unforgiving and generally unsparing, meting out punishments swiftly and unsparingly to rebels and traitors.

Elizabeth's golden moments

1550 1555 1560 1565 1570 1575 1580 1585 1590 1595 1600 1605



1. 1559
Elizabeth is crowned Queen of England. Everyone watches to see if she displays a Protestant leaning but the ceremony is ambiguous.

2. 1566
Elizabeth announces to a Parliament desperate to see her choose a husband that she is married to England.

3. 1569
The Northern Rebellion is crushed. Elizabeth brutally punishes those responsible and sends a shocking reminder to anyone who would challenge her.

4. 1577
Francis Drake circumnavigates the globe and returns with boats filled with riches stolen from the King of Spain.

5. 1587
Elizabeth is forced to execute Mary, Queen of Scots, which is the final straw for Catholic Spain.

6. 1588
The Spanish Armada sails for England, but is decisively defeated. Elizabeth delivers her famous Tilbury speech from horseback, which becomes legend.

7. 1601
Following famine and controversy over her granting monopolies to her favourites, Elizabeth gives her 'Golden Speech' to a furious Parliament and wins them over.

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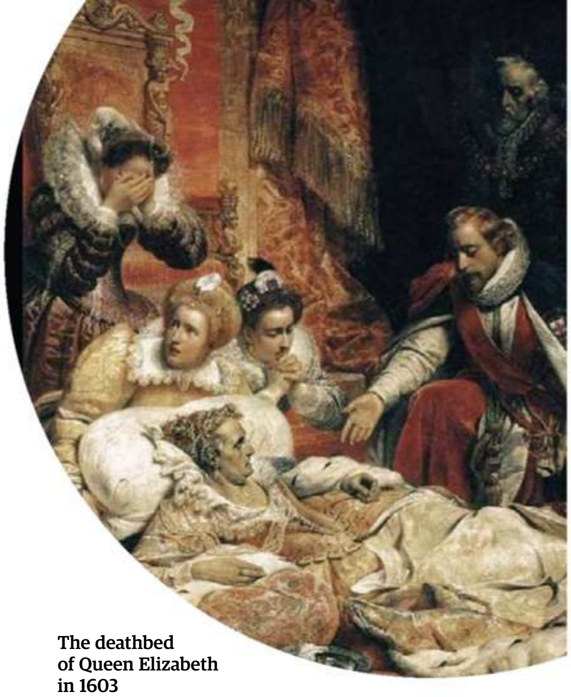


The deathbed of Queen Elizabeth in 1603

power over her and refused to go to bed as she realised that the end was coming soon. Elizabeth finally died on 23 March 1603. Although she had struggled to change with the times in the face of younger, ambitious advisors, she had been a formidable political operator. She had still shown the cunning and cleverness to understand her situation, and had never lost the image of a queen loved by her people.

"That image was not created for her," explains de Lisle. "Elizabeth never forgot the events of 1553 when the ordinary people had backed the Tudor sisters, while the political elite had supported Jane Grey. Nor did she forget how in 1554, Mary had made a speech at the Guildhall that roused London in her defence against the Wyatt rebellion. Mary had spoken of her marriage to her kingdom, describing her coronation ring as a wedding band, and her love of her subjects as that of a mother for her children. These were the phrases and motifs Elizabeth would use repeatedly and would become absolutely central to her reign.

In addition, Elizabeth also had an instinct for the crowd's demands. Even her enemies would admit she had 'the power of enchantment'. She wooed her people with smiles, words of love and great showmanship, and so won their hearts. Elizabeth's people would never forget her. When she died and James I become king, people hugely missed the Tudor theatre of reciprocal love, of which Elizabeth had been the last and brightest star."

Elizabeth's reign was not the golden age that legend so often depicts; she faced serious uprisings, both internal and external, during her reign. She was capable of heartlessness and ruthlessness, and could be indecisive and impetuous. During the course of her rule, England saw famine, rebellion and war. However, there's no mistaking her dedication to her country and her determination to listen to what the people wanted from her – and then give it to them. She walked a political tightrope for most of her life, and the fact that she died peacefully in her bed as queen was a major triumph in itself. The English people loved her, and she, in turn, loved them. In the hearts and minds of many of her subjects, she was – and will always be – Britain's golden monarch.

Louis XIV of France

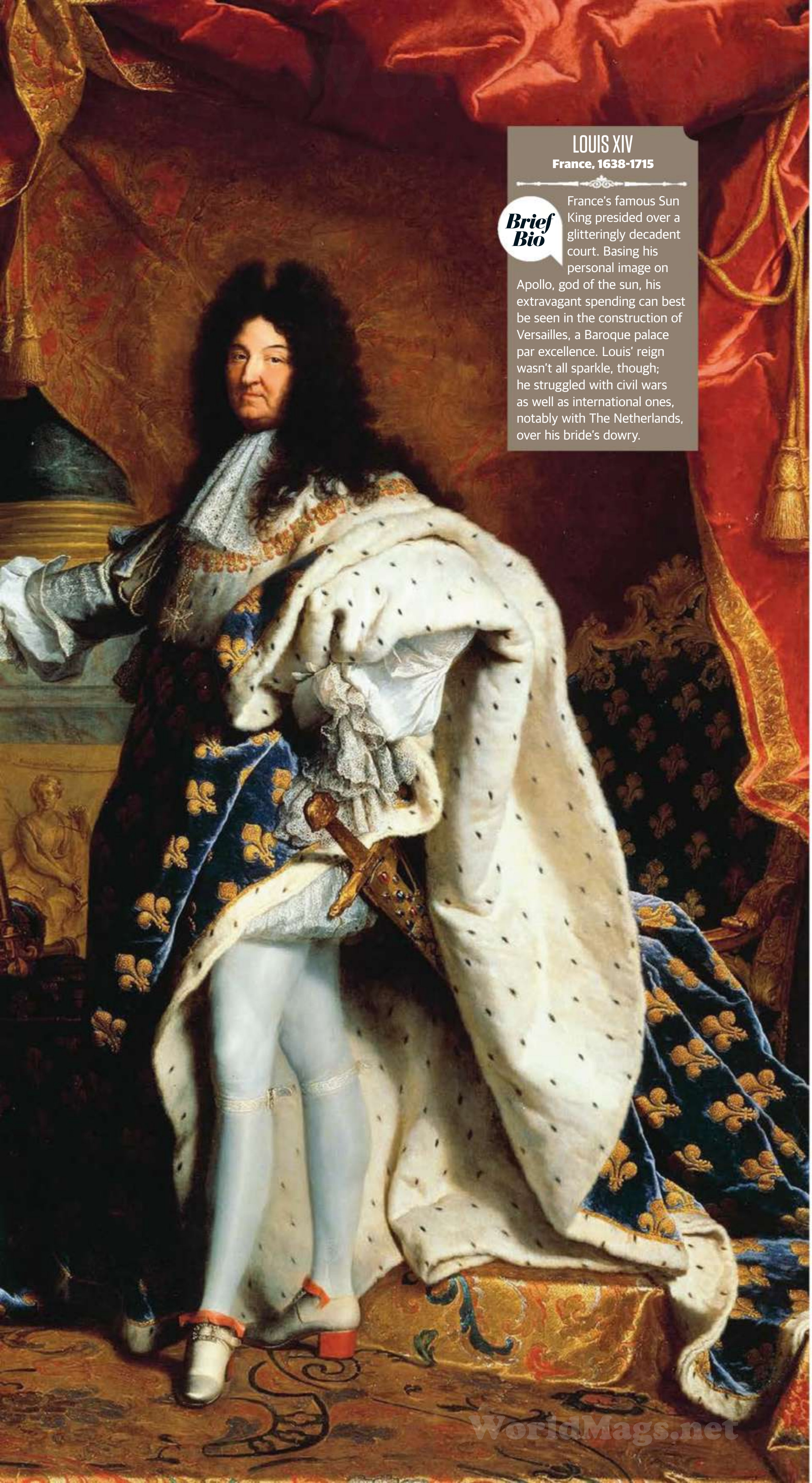
Louis XIV fought rebellions, civil wars and foreign conquests to become the greatest king to ever ascend to the French throne

With the resources of an imperial power behind him, King Louis XIV of France made it his life's work to turn himself from a mere king of a country into a semi-divine entity sent down from heaven to rule an empire. He dispensed with the traditional symbols of the French court and invoked his own; the emblem of the sun itself. In explaining this radical break from tradition, he announced to his court on his ascension to the French throne, 'I chose to assume the form of the sun, because the light it imparts to other stars, the good it does in every place, ceaselessly producing joy, assuredly the most vivid and beautiful image of a great monarch.'

> If he was the Sun King he had become adept at blocking out its radiant light with the fog of blood-stained war

The 'Sun King', as Louis would later be known, had a childhood that was anything but bright, yet the darkness and uncertainty he experienced as a young man served as an excellent education when he ascended to the French throne. As soon as he was born he was placed under guard to make sure the queen and her Spanish relatives did not gain undue influence over him. His mother ignored this challenge to her authority, refusing to surrender her prominent rule in his life. Men of ambition began to ingratiate themselves with her, like Cardinal Mazarin, who became so powerful that it was suspected that he and the Queen were having a relationship. The offspring of this union, according to the great French political writer Voltaire, was thrown into the Bastille and encased in a mask of iron, becoming the famous 'man in the iron mask.' When Louis XIII died in 1643 after protracted health problems, Louis was finally crowned Louis XIV. A courtier said to the young king, "as a living god, the honours of the realm render honour and respect to yourself as to a visible divinity." Yet he was dominated by his mother and her cardinal, who presided over a regency government until he came of age. As Louis grew older he grated underneath this power, but he loved his mother and the cardinal, who tutored Louis on every aspect of kingship.

The love Louis extended to Mazarin was almost unconditional, but France hated the man, who was seen to be using the king as a puppet. In 1649, the French parlement – the principle judiciary of the government – rebelled against Mazarin, and the regency lost control of Paris. To make matters worse, the Spanish took advantage by invading, and the royal family was forced to flee. Parlement, acting on the direction of noblemen who hated Mazarin, demanded freedom of the individual rules on how much taxes could be raised and principles of democratic government. It took the presence of a royal army under French war hero Louis de Bourbon, acting in Louis' name, to bring the rebels to heel. The victory was short-lived, however, as Mazarin and the queen conspired to

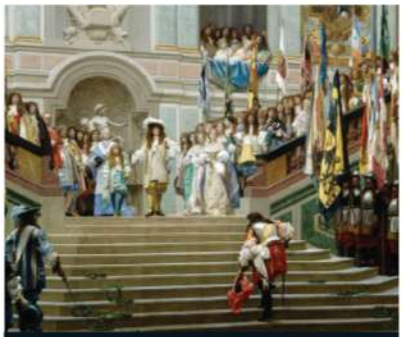


LOUIS XIV

France, 1638-1715

Brief Bio

France's famous Sun King presided over a glitteringly decadent court. Basing his personal image on Apollo, god of the sun, his extravagant spending can best be seen in the construction of Versailles, a Baroque palace par excellence. Louis' reign wasn't all sparkle, though; he struggled with civil wars as well as international ones, notably with The Netherlands, over his bride's dowry.



Louis receiving Louis Bourbon, the grand condé who rebelled against the crown during the War of the Princes

Life with Louis

Health problems

Despite his self-aggrandisement as the embodiment of the Greek god Apollo, Louis suffered from serious health problems throughout his life, including diabetes, rheumatism, malaria, gout and persistent boils on his skin. He ultimately died through complications brought on by the onset of gangrene.

Powerful family

Louis' extended family included other monarchies in Europe, which in turn had the effect of increasing his already substantial influence abroad. His mother, Anne of Austria, was the older sister of King Philip IV of Spain (a connection Louis used for his claim over the country), and he was the first cousin of King Charles II of England.

Religious fanatic

Louis grew up a devout Catholic due to his strict religious education under his chief minister and trusted confidant, Cardinal Mazarin. These beliefs ultimately led him to persecute his Protestant subjects by revoking the 1598 Edict of Nantes, effectively banning French Protestants from worshipping and giving pastors 15 days to leave the country.

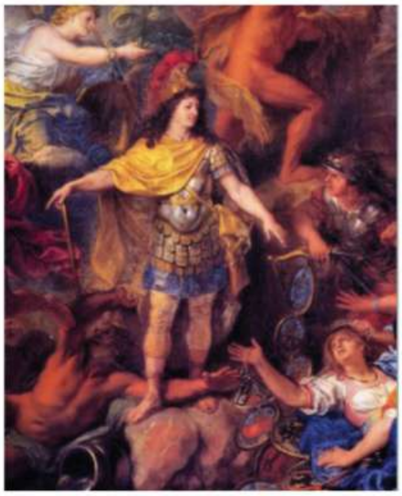
Architect of empire

Louis also expanded the French overseas empire during his reign. His explorers discovered the Mississippi river in 1673, as well as discovering the Mississippi basin, in which the colony of Louisiana was established. The old Franco-Ottoman alliance was also revived, as well as diplomatic relations being established with Siam (Thailand) and China.

Unfaithful husband

The political marriage between Louis and Maria Theresa of Spain was not a happy one. Of their six children, only one survived to adulthood, and Louis was repeatedly unfaithful, taking numerous mistresses which resulted in 14 illegitimate children. After her death in 1683, he went on to marry Françoise d'Aubigné in secret in the same year.

"Louis had sacrificed hundreds of thousands of his own countrymen by the end of the conflict"



The Sun King

For Louis, an absolutist monarch was the equivalent of a god sent down from heaven to rule his subjects with the splendour and glory associated with a divine figure embodied within the king. He truly believed in his heavenly role on Earth, and styled himself on the classical image of the Greek god Apollo, the champion of the hunt and associated with the light of the sun. Louis ordered his image to be painted with the sun as his emblem, he wore clothing which illustrated its glorious light and ordered his trusted courtiers to do the same. In his newly built palace at Versailles, murals of Apollo were stationed within the great halls, along with pictures of Louis portrayed in the role of a conquering hero in grand landscape paintings. He ordered that wherever he went music should be played so that his subjects would think of him as an awe-inspiring figure. In a ballet performed in 1653 he was portrayed as the rising sun; the giver of life. All of these grand gestures were designed to show the world that Louis was the greatest monarch on Earth and his role as God's representative was "grand, noble and delightful."

destroy Bourbon's career on the grounds that he was getting too popular, and another civil war subsequently broke out between the regency and courtiers who sided with Bourbon and his army.

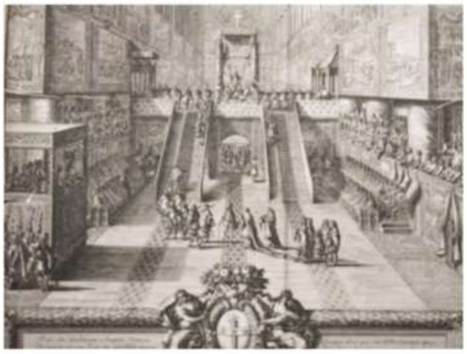
The civil wars shook Louis to his core. Paris was in rebel hands, and the young king and his family were obliged to sleep in tents in the French countryside; it was a dangerous time for kings everywhere, as emphasised by Charles I of England's execution. His mother quietly told Louis that the axe falling on Charles' head was "a blow to make kings tremble." Louis heeded this warning, and decided that military strength through absolute power was the only way to avoid the same fate. When he marched back into Paris, he surrounded himself with Swiss mercenary guards; he no longer trusted his fellow countrymen with his life. He then decided to base himself at the Louvre, since "private houses without moats [for defence] were not for him." The crowds cheered: the young king had come of age and had been born again in the fires of civil war.

Stories abounded of courtiers dabbling in witchcraft. Louis' mistress was implicated as the ringleader of an underground cult

On 9 March 1661, Mazarin, died and with it his influence and power over the French throne. Louis' court was alive with excitement, as one official put it, "women with a claim to beauty flattered themselves that they would hold sway over the 22-year-old prince, young courtiers believed that they would revive the rule of favourites." They were all to be disappointed, as nothing short of a revolution was taking place in the Louvre, where Louis proclaimed to his ministers, "I have been pleased to leave the government of my affairs to the late cardinal. It is time for me to govern them myself. You will assist me with your advice when I ask for it." It was unheard of for a French king to rule without the aid of a chief minister to handle affairs of state. It was to be dubbed later the start of 'a dictatorship by divine right'. Louis had turned himself from a king in charge of a government to a king who *was* the government. He wanted to be "informed about everything, the numbers and qualities of my troops and unceasingly giving my instructions to every requirement."

As a dictator sent down from heaven to rule his subjects, Louis felt he needed a role model to style himself on. The late cardinal and his mother did not fit the bill, nor did any of his minister lackeys; they were too normal, and his social inferiors, besides. He settled on nothing less than a god: Apollo, whose masculine qualities and awe-inspiring power suited his attitude towards kingship. Apollo was the god of the hunt as well as a warrior, matching Louis' ideal of glorious warfare. He was often observed "in the company of his musketeers, instructing them in discipline."

His first target for conquest was his old enemy, the Spanish, whose invasion of France was a humiliation that Louis was determined to avenge.



Defining moment

Coronation

1654

Despite the rebellion, Louis manages to hold on to his authority, as does Mazarin. Louis finally comes of age after 11 years of watching others make decisions for him, and at the age of 15 is officially crowned king of France in the Cathedral of Reims, with what was then regarded as the crown of Charlemagne. Although this ceremony didn't grant him any judicial powers, its religious value was great, elevating his status above the rest of his populace.

Timeline

1638

- **Birth of the Sun King**
  Louis is born in St Germain-en-Laye France to Anne of Austria and Louis XIII, king of France. The French kingdom is deeply divided, creating a dangerous political atmosphere.
  1638

- **Start of minority**
  Louis XIII dies after a protracted illness and Louis is crowned king of France. He is still a child and his kingdom is run through a regency by his mother and his father's most trusted advisor, Cardinal Mazarin.
  1643
- **The peace of Westphalia**
  Mazarin concludes the peace of Westphalia in, gaining recognition of French possessions won in the Thirty Years War and formalising the concept of the sovereign state.
  1648

- **The Fronde rebellion**
  The French parlement refuses to ratify taxes demanded by Mazarin. Rioting breaks out in Paris, which is put down by the army.
  1649
- **War of the Princes**
  Another rebellion breaks out, led by Louis de Bourbon, better known as the grand Condé, the man who helped Louis put down parlement the year previously.
  1650

He saw a crumbling and feeble idiot in the Spanish king, Philip, and decided to show him what he was made of by invading the Spanish Netherlands – modern-day Belgium – on the pretext that his wife had dynastic claims to Spanish land. His battle-hardened royal troops decimated the dilapidated Spanish, the war serving as a grievous blow to their pride. Then, in a bizarre twist of events, in 1668 the Dutch – with Swedish and English backing – called for a truce. Louis saw it as a great betrayal; he had 'liberated' Dutch land from the Spanish, and now they were forcing him to relinquish it. He saw it as "ingratitude, bad faith and insupportable vanity."

Louis swore revenge and launched an invasion against the Netherlands. He paid off the English with gold, and butchered thousands of Dutch soldiers before his troops were finally cut off when dykes were flooded around the royal army. Louis was forced yet again to accept terms, but under the Treaty of Nijmegen of 1678 he was awarded new territories for his tenacity. His power had become almost unending, the portraits he had commissioned of himself as a god-like figure with his vast legions around him stirring his ambition further. In his final great war, he risked everything by going up against a grand alliance of major European powers to influence the Spanish succession and gain power on the continent. The French fought valiantly, but Louis' strength had been depleted, the Battle of Blenheim in 1704 destroying any hopes of influencing Spain. Louis had sacrificed hundreds of thousands of his own countrymen by the end of the conflict, and if he was the Sun King, he had blocked its light with the fog of blood-stained war.

With the ceaseless slaughter in Europe costing thousands of lives and buckling the economy, the French court continued to bask in the glory of Louis' divinity. He commissioned the ruinously expensive palace of Versailles, continued to spend money on personal projects at the expense of the nation, and insisted that his will be obeyed without question. His court became increasingly detached from the nation, exhibiting the decadence and excess that would lend fire to the revolution of 1789. Scandalous stories abounded of courtiers dabbling in witchcraft and sorcery, and Louis' own mistress, Françoise Athénaïs, was implicated as the ringleader of a Parisian cult that worshipped fortune tellers in 1677. To quash these rumours, Louis ordered his court to be "pious in all things" and dismissed Athénaïs, but the gossip continued, to the detriment of his popularity.

By 1715 France, was suffering from a bitter famine after food supplies were diverted to the military. Louis, rarely leaving his palace, was dying of gangrene. On 1 September 1715 he finally passed away, his reign having lasted 72 years. France stood at the brink of greatness, and as a result of his zeal the country had become Europe's dominant force. Louis was France's Caesar, but when his body was moved to the Basilica of St Denis for burial, the people jeered and booed. The power Louis sought was for him alone; the people were merely a means to his ambitions. Ultimately, it was them who suffered under the Sun King's light.

> When he returned to Paris, he surrounded himself with Swiss mercenary guards; he no longer trusted his countrymen

Life in the time of Louis XIV

Absolutism versus constitutionalism

In the wake of the English Civil War, absolutist monarchies – where the monarch had complete control – had to reassess their roles. The governed demanded firm laws and civil rights enshrined in constitutions that no one could break or change.

Hereditary wars

Louis' family connections extended throughout Europe, causing massive upheaval. He demanded privilege in foreign lands that had rulers related to him, but this was extremely unpopular in countries like Spain, where anti-French sentiment was rife. In the end, the two countries went to war with each other, in the process engulfing all of Europe in conflict.

French patronage

In order for Louis to remain the most powerful individual in France, he maintained a patronage system that granted offices and money to people he could trust in return for their loyalty. The system worked so long as Louis could keep the most competent people in charge – which was something he couldn't always rely on.

Expanding world

By the time Louis ascended to the throne, explorers had discovered many new lands in the Americas, and were expanding European influence in the Far East. This enabled many opportunities for trade and diplomacy in distant lands. Louis began funding expeditions into China and the Philippines in search of power and gold.

Art of diplomacy

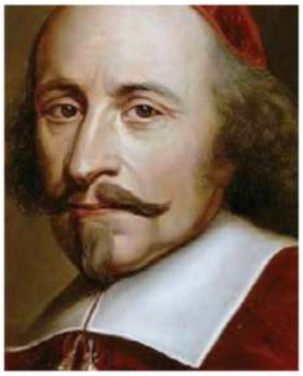
Exploration, trade and war had made it increasingly important for countries to form allegiances and treaties for mutual defence during the 17th Century. Europe was no longer made up of feudal kingdoms going to war on the whims of their lords, and diplomacy was becoming an art, as demonstrated by the peace of Westphalia.

Defining moment

Death of Cardinal Mazarin

1661

The death of Cardinal Mazarin, the man who had been the power behind Louis' throne, is met with joy from the French populace. The unpopularity of Mazarin and the authority released by the power vacuum caused by his death convinces Louis to demand complete control of the country through his personal will; he is unwilling to sit on the sidelines again. He tells his chief ministers, "I request and order you to seal no orders except by my command." This marks the beginning of the absolutist rule of the Sun King.



Invades Spanish Netherlands
Louis invades the Spanish Netherlands in what becomes known as the War of Devolution. The pretext of this bloody campaign is found in the marriage dowry of Louis' wife Maria Theresa of Spain, which he claims was never paid. Louis leads a lightning campaign, capturing huge swathes of land.
1667

Retreat
A peace treaty is signed after the Dutch, Swedes and English threaten to go to war with France, which has the effect of forcing Louis to relinquish control of much of the conquered territory that he has previously captured.
1668

invasion of the Netherlands
Louis' anger at the Dutch does not lose its venom, and in 1672 he launches an invasion of the Netherlands. The fighting is finally brought to an end with the Treaty of Nijmegen, which awards France new territory.
1672

Court moves to Versailles
Louis' self-depiction as a prince of the heavens is made manifest with the construction of Versailles – at the cost of wrecking the economy.
1682

Revoke of Edict of Nantes
With his power abroad waning, Louis seeks to consolidate his domestic power by revoking the Edict of Nantes, which guaranteed Protestants' religious freedom.
1685

1715

Death of the Sun King
Louis dies after suffering from a severe onset of gangrene aged 76. The populace jeer as his body is laid to rest because of the hardships he forced the country to endure.
1715

AFONSO I

Portugal, 1109 – 1185

Brief Bio

Born to the Count of Portugal and his wife Theresa, Afonso transformed his domain from a county to an independent nation, seceding from the rule of the Kingdom of Galicia. All were fair game in his rise to power – along the way he even imprisoned his own mother in order to garner more power.

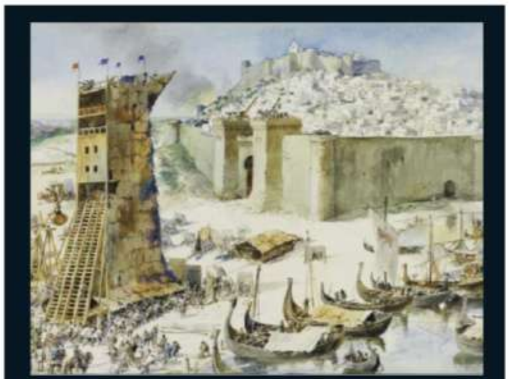
King Afonso I

The legendary first King of Portugal, Afonso I spent his tenure on Earth fighting a brutal series of wars to ensure his kingdom's independence

King Afonso I of Portugal was known by many different names during his lifetime, including Afonso Henriques, Prince Afonso of Portugal and Afonso the Conqueror, however it was as King Afonso I of Portugal that he cemented his place in history, with his bloody deeds in battle founding an entire nation. Today, Portugal is a thriving country, sharing a landmass with its neighbour Spain, however, in the 12th Century, this land was segregated along very different lines, with the Kingdom of León and Kingdom of Galicia, among others, each fighting among themselves and with the Moorish peoples of the Iberian Peninsula for control of the region.

It was into this hectic mix that Afonso Henriques was born, the son of Henry, Count of Portugal, and Theresa of León. Both his parents reigned jointly as Count and Countess of Portugal, with the pair paying allegiance to King Alfonso VI of León. However, upon Henry's death, Theresa reigned alone and soon remarried a powerful but disliked Galician count, who proceeded to exile his enemies from the kingdom. The Portuguese nobility, angered by the allegiance with Galicia and the banishment of their own, threw their support behind Afonso and as soon as he turned 14 he made himself a knight on his own account, elevating himself in the Cathedral of Zamora.

Now a knight and with the support of the majority of the Portuguese nobility, Afonso found no difficulty in raising an army, and moved against his mother and the Galician count's troops, defeating them near Guimarães in the Battle of São Mamede. With a decisive victory his, he then



46 years of Moor war

Why did Afonso I spend 46 years of his life in bloody battle with the Moorish peoples of the Iberian Peninsula?

While today Afonso I is mainly remembered for his foundation of Portugal as an independent country, separating itself through battle from the Kingdom of León in 1139 CE, he in fact spent far more of his life fighting against the Moors of the Iberian Peninsula than his enemies closer to home. This was largely due to Afonso inheriting the centuries-old Christian church-led 'Reconquista', a holy mission to reclaim territories that had once belonged to them from a series of now predominantly Muslim states. The importance of Afonso using his power as King of Portugal against the Moors was ensured by the support of the pope in Rome, who not only recognised his new country's independence, but claimed that he was free under the eyes of the Christian God to take as much Moorish territory as he liked, while also being free to pillage and loot to enhance his kingdom's wealth.

Afonso took this to heart during his reign, frequently ordering or encouraging his troops or allies – such as the Knights Templar, who Afonso welcomed to Portugal with open arms – to fight the Moors wherever possible. As a consequence, Afonso I oversaw more than ten wars between Portugal and the Moors during his reign, including one of the largest and most famous sieges in history, with the Siege of Lisbon seeing much of the Christian world's troops descending on the city to place it in Catholic hands. Interestingly, however, despite Afonso's many conquests, the Reconquista would not come to an end in his lifetime or even that of his son or grandsons, with the religious warfare continuing on and off right up until the close of the 15th Century, over 300 years later.

A statue of Afonso I that stands today in Guimarães, Portugal

proceeded to banish his mother for her crimes to a monastery in Galicia, where she lived out the remainder of her days in disgrace. Afonso, who was now Duke of Portugal and sole ruler, then proceeded to fight off his mother's nephew, Alfonso VII of León, thereby freeing the Kingdom of Portugal from dependence on the dominant Kingdom of León. On 6 April 1129, Afonso took the next step in his epic journey, declaring himself Prince of Portugal.

His mother and the rival Kingdom of León dealt with, Afonso then proceeded to turn his troops onto the Moorish peoples who inhabited his kingdom's southern territories. The Islamic Moors had travelled across from Africa over the preceding centuries, sometimes taking terrain on the Iberian Peninsula by force, other times merely by expanding trade routes. Either way, with the rise and spread of Catholicism throughout Medieval Europe, the Moorish presence was considered heretical and something that needed to be eradicated. As such, as Afonso rose to power he found himself indoctrinated into the Reconquista, an established movement by Christian countries to conquer all Islamic peoples throughout Europe.

As such, over the next decade from 1129 to 1139, Afonso led a series of successful campaigns against the Moorish people of the region, culminating on 25 July 1139 with a crushing victory at the Battle of Ourique over the long-established Almoravid Moors of Ali ibn Yusuf. This victory was so complete that Afonso was immediately proclaimed King of the Portuguese, an act that elevated him to a rank equal to the rulers of the other realms of the Peninsula. Afonso's coronation was held the next day, officially making him King Afonso I of Portugal and the newly-established country's first monarch.

While Afonso's position and country were now established in terms of politics and arms, it was still largely unrecognised by the highest Christian authority in the world, the Catholic church and Pope in Rome. Afonso therefore immediately moved to rectify this, wedding Maud of Savoy – daughter of Amadeus III of the long-established and respected Christian House of Savoy – and sending an envoy of ambassadors to Rome to negotiate becoming a vassal of the papacy, as the kings of Sicily and Aragon had historically done before him.

> "With the rise and spread of Catholicism through Medieval Europe, the Moorish presence was considered heretical"

Timeline

1109

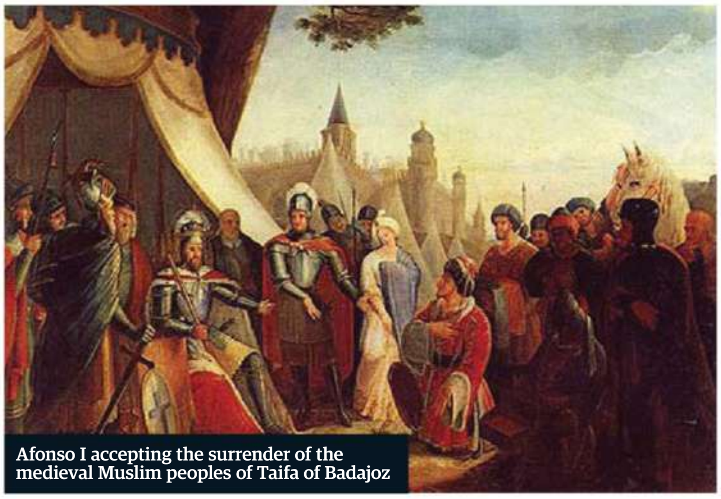
Born in Guimarães
Afonso Henriques is born to Henry, Count of Portugal and Theresa of León. His parents reign jointly as Count and Countess of Portugal until Henry's death, after which time Theresa reigns alone.
25 June 1109

Defeats his mother
After Theresa remarries a disliked Galician count, Afonso is backed by the rest of the Portuguese nobility and he defeats her forces at the Battle of Sao Mamede before exiling her permanently to a monastery in Galicia.
1128

Mother dies
Banished to Galicia, Afonso's mother's health deteriorates and she dies in 1130. In the same year, Afonso invades Galicia and the Knights Hospitaller install themselves in Portugal.
1130

Moors conquered
Now proclaimed Prince of Portugal, Afonso continues to conquer by taking Leiria and overthrowing its Moorish inhabitants. King Alfonso VII of Castile and León proclaims himself Emperor.
1135

Independence of Portugal
The Kingdom of Portugal is declared independent from the Kingdom of León after the Battle of Ourique. Prince Afonso Henriques finally becomes Afonso I, King of Portugal, the new country's first monarch.
25 July 1139



Afonso I accepting the surrender of the medieval Muslim peoples of Taifa of Badajoz

Impressed with his dedication to the faith, the Pope accepted Afonso as a new king and as a vassal to the Catholic church in Rome, rather than to his cousin, Alfonso VII of León.

Portugal was now completely independent from its rivals and one of the most dominant Catholic countries in Europe. With wealth and power flooding into the new country, Afonso proceeded with several construction projects, including many monasteries and churches, and granted religious institutions such as the Knights Templar – an incredibly powerful Christian military order that grew to great fame through its participation in the Crusades – unprecedented privileges and territory. In return, Afonso's troops were bolstered by the best Christian knights in the world, with the combined might allowing him to undertake even more military campaigns against the remaining Moorish peoples in the region.

Indeed, starting in 1147, Afonso first led the successful capture of the city of Santarém and then, with the aid of thousands of Christian Crusaders, Lisbon, with the Moorish overlords of the city's ruling Kingdom of Badajoz overthrown. This latter conquest was and is today seen as a pivotal battle in the Reconquista, with it signalling the beginning of the end of widespread Moorish occupation of the region and the dominance of Islam in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. Afonso I was now one of the most powerful kings in the western world, recognised by his people, the Pope and even many of the region's rival rulers.

However, one ruler who still did not recognise Afonso's legitimacy was his old nemesis, Alfonso VII of León, who still considered him merely a powerful illegitimate rebel. As such, throughout the 1150s and 1160s, the leaders of León and Portugal engaged in a series of bitter battles, with Afonso eventually struck down in a battle near Badajoz and captured by soldiers loyal to León. He was freed shortly after, however, though this was only after forfeiting many conquered territories in Galicia to his old rival. Despite this constant call of illegitimacy from the King of León, when Pope Alexander III acknowledged that Portugal was an independent crown in his 1179 CE papal bull Manifestis Probatum – papal bulls were the most official of Catholic charters – any lingering claims were quashed.

By the time the country of Portugal entered the 1180s however, Afonso was now an incredibly old man, with a life of near-constant warfare eventually taking its toll on the ruler's health. He did still make one last campaign in 1184 to help his son Dom Sancho fight off a remnant army of Moors who were besieging Santarém, however for the last five years of his life Afonso I enjoyed the fruit of his now-secured kingdom. Finally, on 6 December 1185 CE, Afonso I of Portugal died of old age, with the people of Portugal proceeding to celebrate his reign in song, word and deed – something that they still do today.

How one looks at the reign of Afonso largely depends on context. Today, Afonso's bloodlust and religious intolerance is hard to view objectively, considering that he essentially embarked on a series of genocidal campaigns against Islamic people. The banishment of his mother to die alone in a foreign kingdom is also ethically questionable. However by the standards of other Medieval rulers, Afonso's protection of his own kingdom at all costs and pursuit of religious warfare is very much of its time, with the aggressive us-versus-them mindset par for the course. In many respects, Afonso I was a king of extremes, with his decisions always determined and followed through with a zealous certainty that, whatever their outcome, could not be questioned.

Top five facts – Afonso I

Heavy sword

According to legend, it took ten men to carry Afonso I's sword due to his supposedly inhuman strength and military might. He also reportedly challenged rival monarchs to hand-to-hand duels.

Tomb forbidden

In 2006 researchers from the University of Coimbra in Portugal attempted to open the tomb of Afonso I. Unfortunately, many Portuguese people objected and the permission was rescinded.

Knights Templar

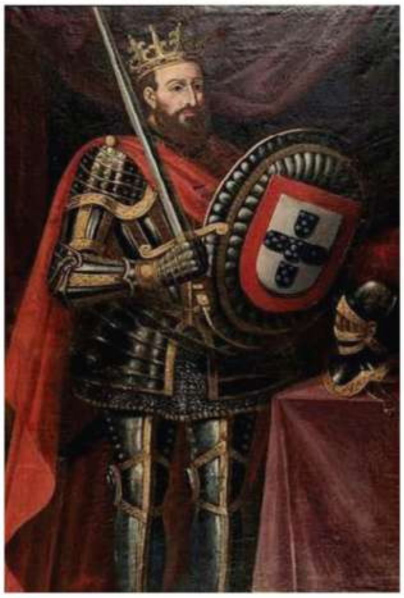
Afonso I was a key ally to the Knights Templar and Christian crusaders in general, granting them land, castles and plunder rights from any Moorish territory they conquered.

Reconquista obsessive

Afonso was reportedly obsessed with the Reconquista, a centuries-old mission to retake the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors. The Reconquista finally ended with the fall of Granada in 1492 CE.

Sancho succeeds

After living to the ripe old age of 76, Afonso is finally succeeded by his son Sancho, who becomes Sancho I of Portugal. Sancho proceeds to rule the country for 27 years.



Marries Maud
After spending the first five years or so of his reign fighting the Moors, King Afonso I decides it's time to strengthen his position and marries Maud of Savoy, daughter of Amadeus III, Count of Savoy and Maurienne.
1146

Lisbon taken
The army of King Afonso I is bolstered by a Crusader army from England, and combined they besiege the Moor-held city of Lisbon. Afonso takes Lisbon and the Moorish inhabitants flee, with the city's gates opening to the Christian army.
1147

Afonso captured
Decades later, Afonso I is captured after an engagement near Badajoz and made a prisoner of the King of León, his son-in-law. He is forced to forfeit many territories in Galicia to pay his ransom.
1169

Recognised by Pope
Pope Alexander III, in the papal bull Manifestis Probatum, recognises Afonso I as King of Portugal and the country as independent. He also recognises the country's right to conquer any lands held by the Moors.
1179

1185

One last stand
Despite being over 70 years old, Afonso I still comes to the aid of his son Dom Sancho, who was being besieged in Santarém by the Moors. One year later Afonso dies on 6 December
1185

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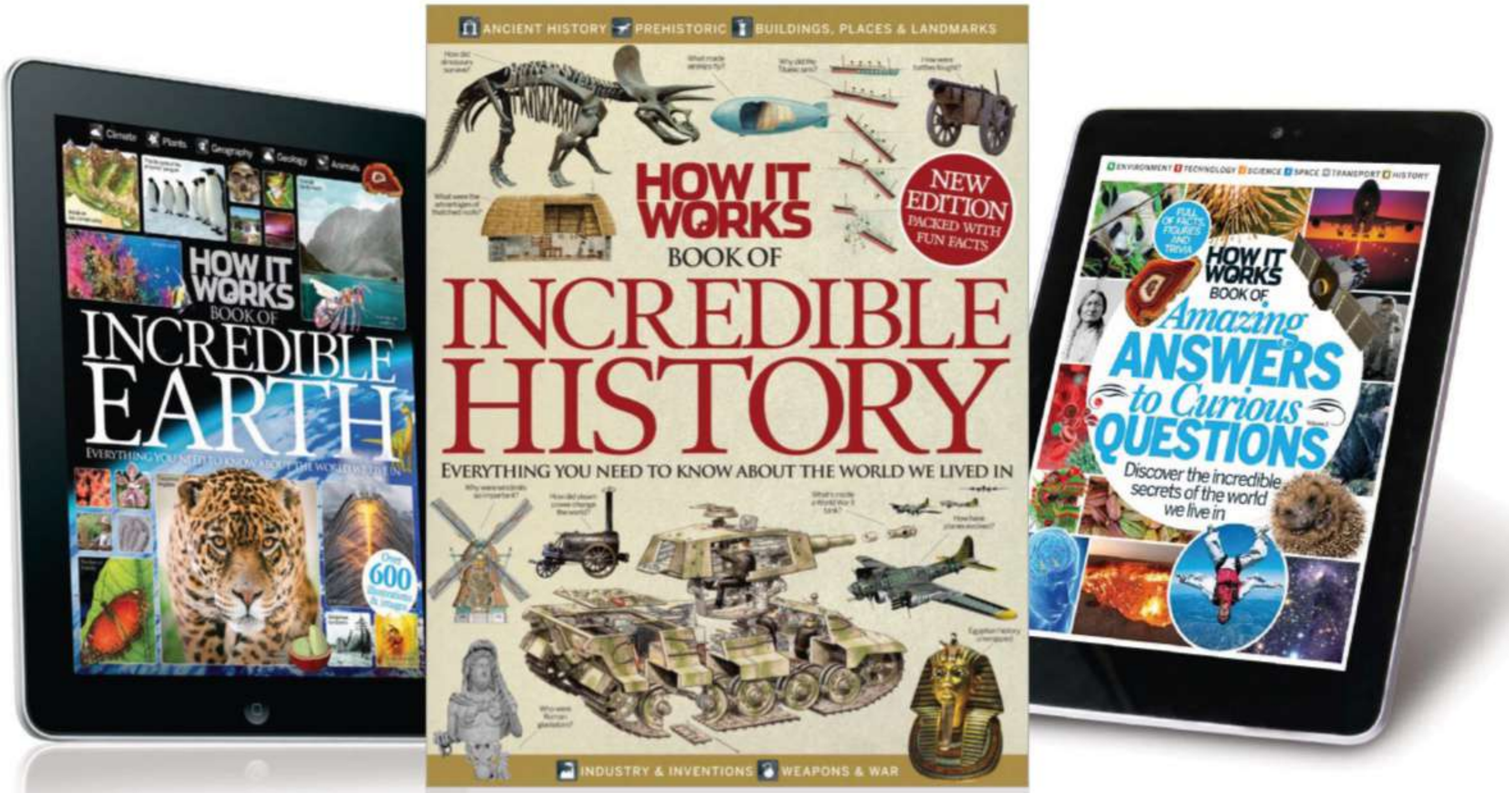
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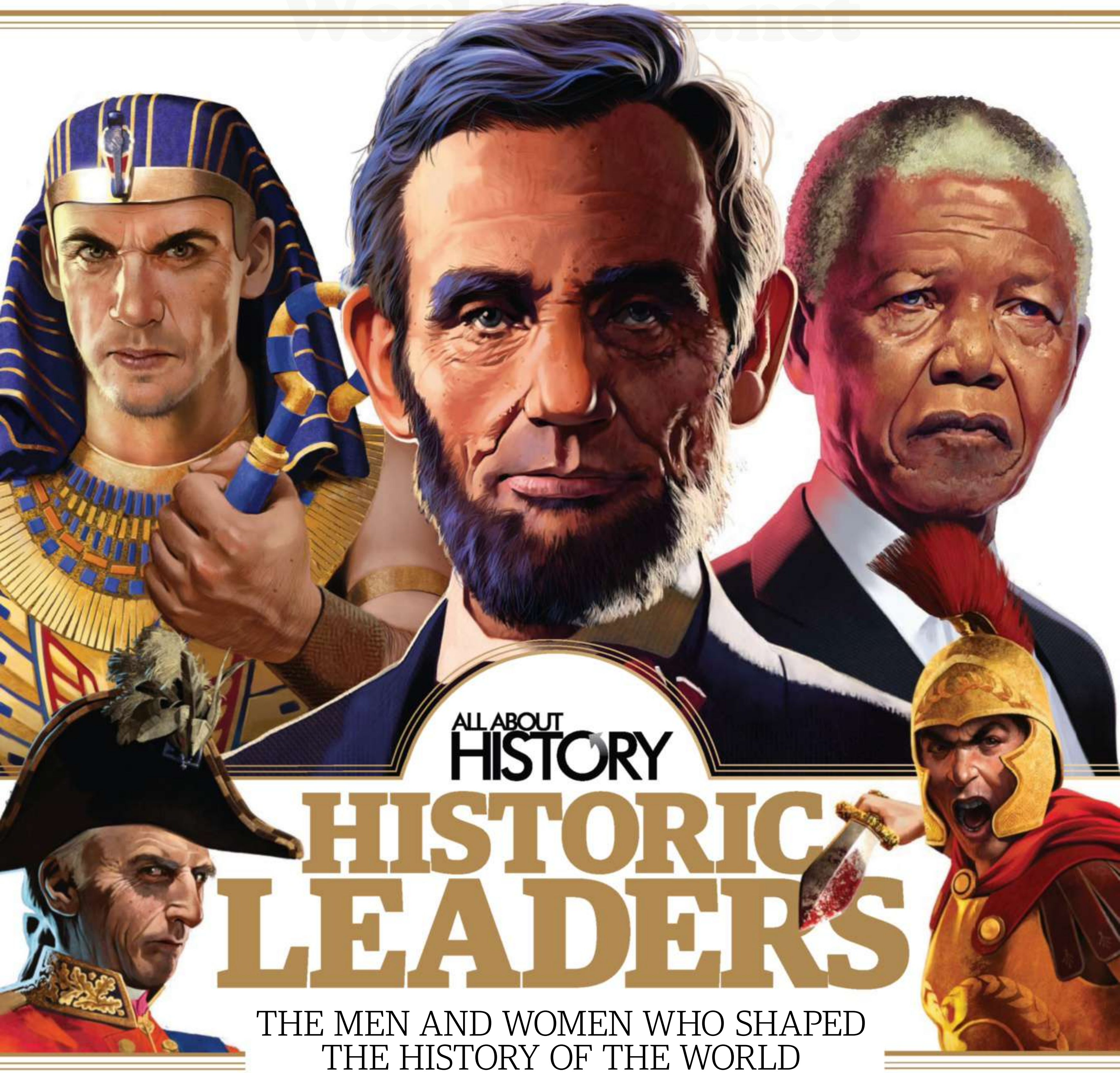

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